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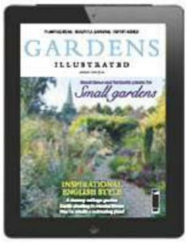
editor's letter

For years I've dreamed of living in the countryside, but demands of work mean it makes more sense to live near the magazine's offices in Bristol. My garden is big by Bristol standards (36m long) but nowhere near as large as most of the gardens we feature. I'm conscious that like myself, many readers are looking for inspiration for more modest-sized plots, so I'm delighted to say that in this issue we feature five smaller gardens (pages 31-49) packed with ideas, while on page 70 Graham Gough, of Marchants Hardy Plants in East Sussex, shares his thoughts on the best plants to select when space is limited. Even when the gardens we feature run to several acres, we do our best to ensure we focus on plenty of ideas to steal, such as interesting plant combinations. This issue we look at some exceptionally lovely English gardens including the restored garden to Herefordshire Arts and Crafts house Perrycroft (page 50), Coleton Fishacre, a National Trust garden in coastal Devon (page 80), and the ultimate cottage garden at Grafton in Staffordshire (page 58). On page 86, we also visit a family garden in Dorset with a natural swimming pond, which reminds me: maybe one day I will need a couple of acres to play with.

Hope you enjoy the issue,

Juliet



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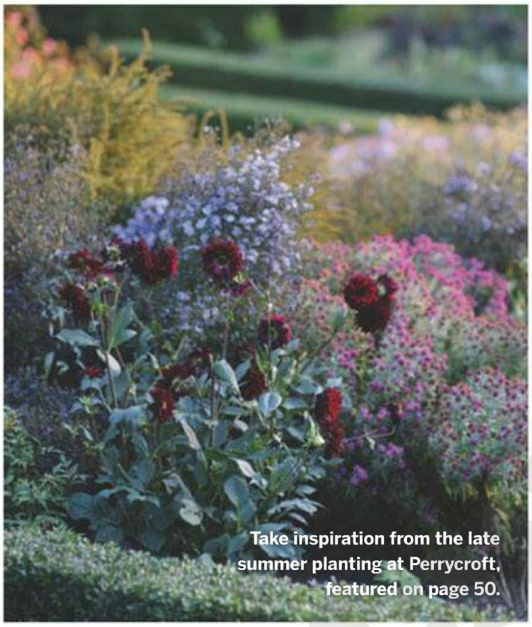
Our small-garden special, starting on page 31, is full of exquisite ideas on how to make a small space work.



Take inspiration from the late summer planting at Perrycroft, featured on page 50.

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Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.

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DAN PEARSON
Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

JASON INGRAM; MARIANNE MAJERUS

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AUGUST 2012

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Annie Godfrey transformed a typical suburban plot into a stylish gravel garden. Photograph by Marianne Majerus.
See feature on page 42.

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- Join us for a GARDENS ILLUSTRATED reader day at Great Dixter on 12 November – page 16
- Subscribe today and get your first five issues for £5* – see page 28

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contributors

SHARON PEARSON

GRAHAM GOUGH

Plantsman Graham's Sussex nursery Marchants Hardy Plants has received countless enviable plaudits for its eclectic plants and beautiful garden. On page 70 he offers his pick of the best plants to consider for growing in a small space.

"In a small garden, every plant has to work twice as hard to earn its place and you need to be doubly discerning in your choices."

ANNE DE VERTEUIL

Designer and writer Anne's interest in design was sparked by a visit to gardens in northern Italy where landscape, planting and theatre all come together. A touch of stagecraft has also been applied to the deliciously delightful city garden she writes about on page 46.

"I love Ann-Marie's design for this garden. It really celebrates the art of growing and is clever, inventive and fun."

SUSAN ELDERKIN

A novelist and travel writer, Susan's first freelance article for GARDENS ILLUSTRATED was about a bottle garden in New Mexico, which ignited a love of desert plants. These are very much to the fore in the garden at Coleton Fishacre (page 80) she visited for us this issue.

"It's pretty much my dream garden – desert plants, herbacious English plants and all the glamour of the D'Oyly Cartes."

STEVE WHYSALL

The author of five bestselling books on plants, Steve was born in Nottingham but moved to Canada in 1975. For the past 20 years he has written on gardens for *The Vancouver Sun* in British Columbia, where he visited the garden of sculptor Birgit Piskor (page 36).

"What I loved most about Birgit's garden was the diverse range of plant material being grown in a relatively small space."

EXCLUSIVE READER HOLIDAY

29 November – 11 December 2012

MUGHAL GARDENS AND PALACES

Explore the history and culture behind the grand palaces and gardens once home to India's magnificent Mughal emperors

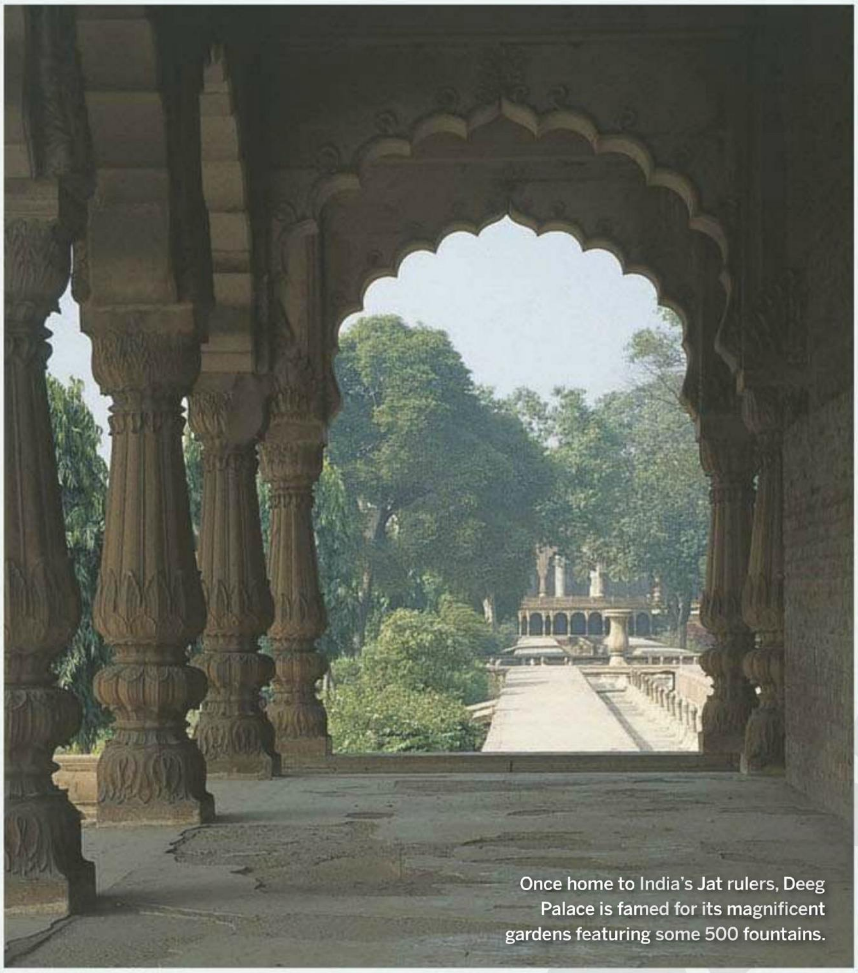
TOUR LEADER

JOHN BROOKES MBE

In a career spanning 50 years, John has designed more than 1,000 gardens. Travels to Persia and India have influenced his designs and form the basis of his book *Gardens of Paradise*.

The palaces and gardens of North India were built by the 16th- and 17th-century Mughal emperors to house their great courts. As well as visiting some of the major sites and gardens, this specially planned journey takes in many less visited yet stunning gardens and palaces in the region, thanks to the connections of your tour leader, the distinguished designer John Brookes. John has also planned a number of special events for the party. And throughout the tour you will stay in some of India's finest hotels and palaces.

The tour begins amid the splendour of the ancient walled city of Delhi before moving on to Agra, Bharatpur, Jaipur, Bijaipur, Udaipur and finally to Mumbai. Highlights include Lodhi Gardens, Mehtab Bagh, or Moonlight Garden, with its own splendid view of the Taj Mahal, the gardens and water palaces at Deeg, Amber Fort and Kumbhalgarh, with its eight miles of castellated ramparts. At every point on the trip there is the natural beauty of India and the vibrant history and culture to enjoy. □



Once home to India's Jat rulers, Deeg Palace is famed for its magnificent gardens featuring some 500 fountains.

Tour information

Mughal Gardens and Palaces, 29 November – 11 December. Cost: £3,960 includes return flights from London (single room supplement applies). For further information about this trip, day-to-day activities, hotel accommodation and details of how to book, please contact Distant Horizons, 13 Melloncroft Drive, Caldy, Wirral CH48 2JA, UK

Tel **+44 (0)151 625 3425** Email **info@distanthorizons.co.uk** Website **www.distanthorizons.co.uk**

NOTE itineraries are subject to confirmation. Places are limited, so early booking is recommended.

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letters

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Star letter

Perfect pots

I have always wanted to grow harebells (*Campanula rotundifolia*) but fear the dreaded slugs will devour them the minute my back is turned. After reading Sarah Price's advice on planting in pots (issue 187, page 42), I realised I could grow this gorgeous perennial in a container. I chose an old, wicker wall basket that was gathering dust in the shed. I planted the harebells with an ornamental grass, baby's breath (*Gypsophila repens*), and thrift (*Armeria*) to create an ethereal style of planting. Following Sarah's advice I chose a pale green background (my chicken coop) to enhance the arrangement. Not only do the flowers look great, the chickens will do a wonderful job of making sure there are no slugs to destroy my work of art.

Jacqui Brocklehurst, by email

Reader project

Palace coop

Last year (issue 174) I sent you a photo of the hen house I had single-handedly built. A year on my husband and I thought they might appreciate a new space in the garden for the summer months. This necessitated a new hut, which my husband insisted he build this time. He did make rather a good job of it, and now our hens have two residences: Cluckingham Palace (mine) and Flygrove (his).

Paula Sunshine, by email

Design dilemma

Back to white

I've just received my copy of June's GARDENS ILLUSTRATED, and am pleased to see that the white band on the cover is back. I noticed it had vanished in May and was concerned it might have got left behind at the BBC.

No one can deny the quality of the magazine's photography, but so many elements go to make the publication one we love – not least the characteristically generous use of white space, which allows both the copy and the illustrations to breathe. So thank you for restoring peace and tranquillity to the cover. It really is very much appreciated.

Andrew O'Brien, by email

EDITOR'S RESPONSE: We're thrilled you enjoy the magazine and hope you haven't abandoned us after the white band slipped off again in July. Sometimes our cover images are just too beautiful to cover up. Sorry.

Guerrilla gardening

Safety first

I left my beautiful garden and moved into a ground-floor apartment, which bans window boxes (they might fall on someone) and troughs (someone may fall over them). But the site manager agreed to lay two paving slabs outside my front door, so I bought two large pots, and planted geraniums.

This summer I have again planted deep red, trailing geraniums, but I have gradually hidden extra plant pots – with cosmos, verbena, foxgloves and iris – behind them. I'm hoping for a splash of colour, while keeping within the 'no troughs, no window boxes, and no hazards for the postman' rule.

Alwyn Benbow, Shropshire

WRITE TO US & WIN

The star letter wins a pair of Tobisho secateurs, worth £62. These award-winning Japanese pruners are hand-forged out of high-quality steel. For details visit www.niwaki.com

TALKING POINT

Terry Baker argues that new cultivars are becoming the garden equivalent of fast food.

Do we need any more new plants?

With so many beautiful plants already available, why invent any more? Is it the case that those who front gardening programmes, or write about plants in magazines, lack the skill to enthuse about existing plants in an interesting and informative way? New is an easy adjective, but are today's new plants properly trialled? In my father's day, a new plant would be propagated, continually to build up stock. This meant that the cultivar experienced diverse winter weather over the many years it took to build up enough to sell. Today, a new plant can be discovered, and tissue cultured and made available to markets throughout Europe, North America and even Japan, within a year or two, with little to prove perenniality. After which the grower might be tempted to move on to the next new thing.

New cultivars need time for proper assessment.

Terry Baker of the Botanic Nursery is a nurseryman and garden designer with over 40 years' experience.

- What's your view on new cultivars? Please share your views and write to us by post or email (see details above)

JASON INGRAM, ANDREA JONES/GAP PHOTO

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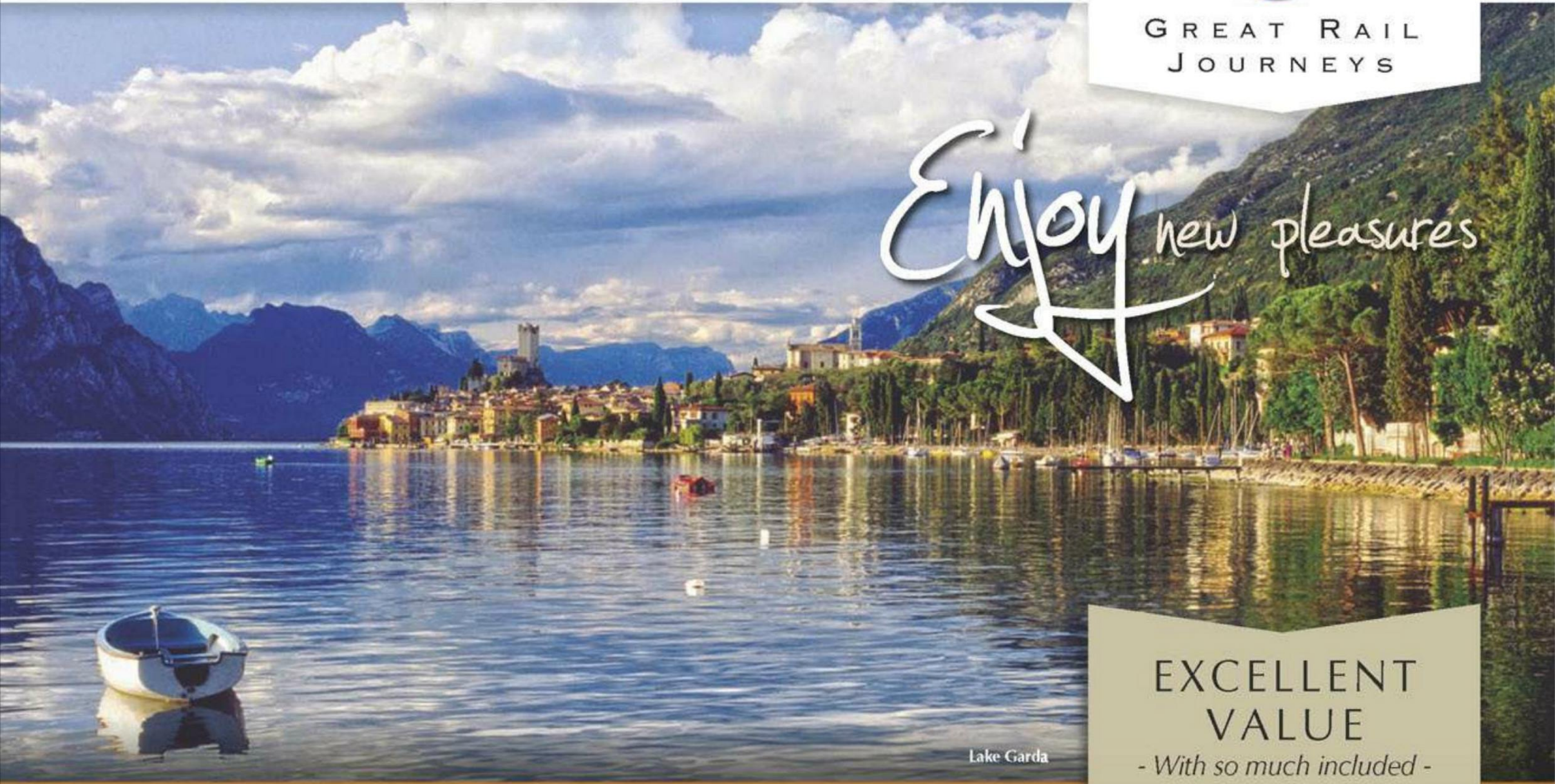

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Day 2: To Italy. *TGV* towards the Alps before crossing the border into Italy where we change in Milan, continuing for seven nights in Desenzano on the southern shores of vast Lake Garda, beginning with dinner together.

Day 3: Romantic Venice. Excursion by train to Italy's magical 'floating city', with a private boat to the magnificent St Mark's Square for a walking tour and free time to explore the myriad of winding alleyways, criss-crossing bridges and secret piazzas.

Day 4: Excursion to Sirmione. Boat trip to picturesque Sirmione with its pretty piazzas, narrow lanes and fantastic views of the lake against a dramatic, mountainous backdrop, including free time to visit the 13th century Rocca Scaligeri castle and the ancient ruins of Villa Romana.

Day 5: Market day in Desenzano. A free day to explore the medieval streets, stroll by the pretty waterfront and browse the bustling market. Or perhaps, visit the nearby lakeside town of Malcesine with a 14th century castle, pastel-coloured cafés around a charming harbour and a panoramic cable car to Monte Baldo.

Day 6: Isola del Garda. Private boat to Lake Garda's largest island for a guided tour of a beautiful neo-Gothic villa with glorious exotic gardens.

Day 7: Excursion to Verona. A full day visit to the charming walled city dating back to Roman times and the setting for Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Guided tour through the medieval streets and ancient piazzas to the imposing Roman Arena which is now an open-air Opera House.

Day 8: A day at leisure. Time to relax in Desenzano and enjoy Lake Garda or perhaps take a day trip to Milan to browse the designer shops in the glass-roofed Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, see the magnificent Duomo and the world-renowned Opera House, 'Teatro alla Scala'.

Day 9: Across Austria to Strasbourg. Travel through Milan and Basel to Strasbourg where we spend our final night.

Day 10: Strasbourg to London. *TGV* to Paris, transferring to the *Eurostar* service to St Pancras International.

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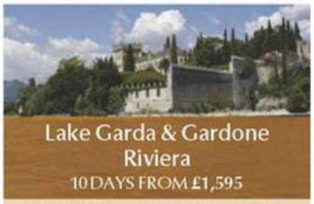

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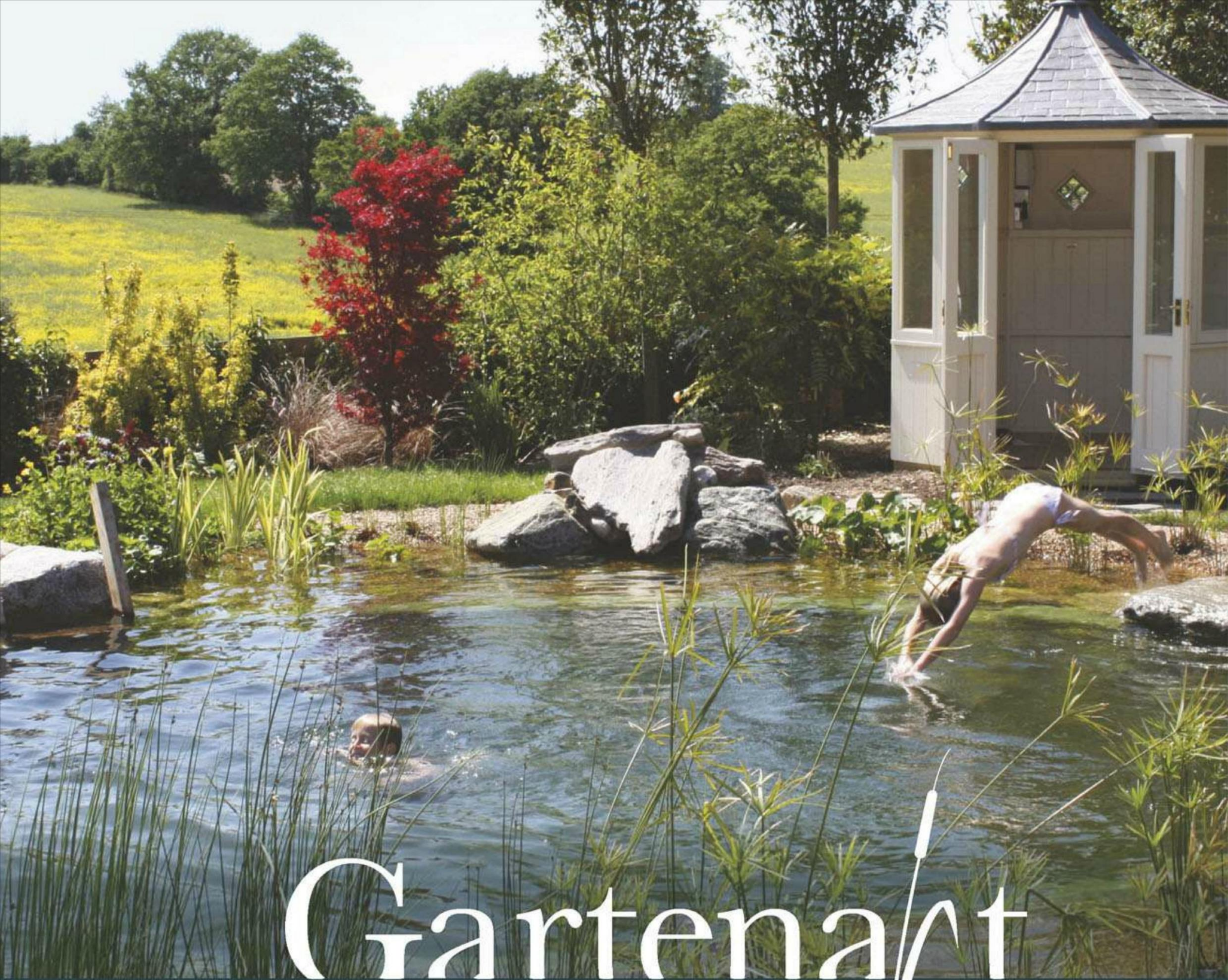
ALAMY

NATIONAL EVENT

National Allotments Week

Allotments have firmly re-established themselves as an integral part to many of our communities, and their benefits to health and well-being have been well documented. The importance now is to ensure their continued existence against the ever-present threat of development. This is what the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners is calling allotmenteers to heed in their celebration this month during National Allotments Week, 6-12 August. Make sure your allotment is hosting a party, setting up displays, running workshops and opening its gates to the public – to show the nation how crucial a role allotments play. For support, guidance and advice on allotments see www.nsalg.org.uk



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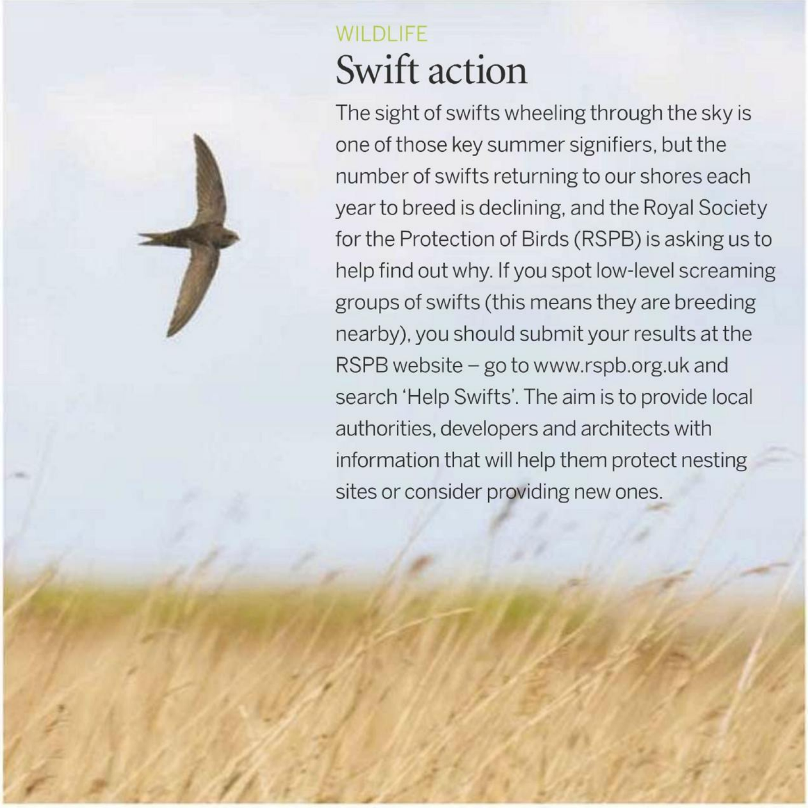
DESIGN

Summer's fruitfulness

Bring the harvest into your kitchen with these lovely jacquard woven tea towels from Finland. There are four different fruit-inspired designs; blackcurrant, golden berry, gooseberry and raspberry. £9.95 each, available from Hus & Hem in Ledbury. Tel 01531 631044, www.husandhem.co.uk



WILDLIFE

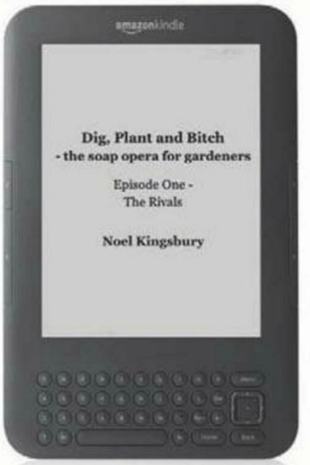
Swift action

The sight of swifts wheeling through the sky is one of those key summer signifiers, but the number of swifts returning to our shores each year to breed is declining, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is asking us to help find out why. If you spot low-level screaming groups of swifts (this means they are breeding nearby), you should submit your results at the RSPB website – go to www.rspb.org.uk and search 'Help Swifts'. The aim is to provide local authorities, developers and architects with information that will help them protect nesting sites or consider providing new ones.

NEW FINDINGS

No chemical weed killer

Recent results of studies at the University of Copenhagen have shown that blanching with hot water, steaming, or flaming stubborn weeds growing in between paving can be as effective as treating with chemical weedkillers. The key to success is repeated treatment, ideally six times, with leaves needing to completely collapse after each treatment. Home gardeners could pour on boiling water (at 95°C) or use a flamegun (Harrod Horticultural has two options, pictured is the paraffin flame- gun).



READ

Drama in the garden

If you're looking for something entertaining to read over the holidays, and you're a Kindle convert, try downloading *Dig, Plant and Bitch*, billed as 'the world's first gardening soap'. Written by planting expert Noël Kingsbury, the three episodes currently available immerse us in a fictional world of gardening rivalry and social mishaps. Amid the ruffled borders and salacious tittle-tattle are gems of horticultural information. Available via Amazon at £1.95 an episode, www.amazon.co.uk. Sign up to Noël's soap email and he'll let you know when the next episode is due: gardensoapopera@yahoo.co.uk

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NOSEY PARKER

We ask inquisitive questions to gardening people

Jim Gardiner

Director or horticulture at the Royal Horticultural Society, whose responsibilities include heading up the plant trials and Award of Garden Merit (AGM) scheme

What is your earliest gardening memory? At primary school planting summer bedding but most influentially at the age of 13, my parents receiving plants from Hillier Nurseries including *Paeonia delavayi* var. *lutea* to plant in a newly created garden.

How did you become involved with gardening as a profession/hobby? Holiday jobs including nursery work in Gloucestershire and then as a horticultural apprentice at the Royal Gardens and Great Park Windsor.

Who has inspired you the most? The late botanist John Gilmour, the late John Bond who was in charge of Windsor Great Park and Dick Shaw, former curator at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

How many plant trials are currently running at the RHS Garden at Wisley? Twenty one trials are currently being assessed at RHS Wisley, including phlox, sweet pea, dianthus and dahlia. New ones for 2012 include blackberry and clematis.

What does the trial process look for? Assessment criteria include: excellent for ordinary use in appropriate conditions; available; of good constitution; essentially stable in form and colour; reasonably resistant to pests and diseases. At the end of the trial we recommend the best performing plants for award.

What was the first plant to be awarded an AGM? *Crocus speciosus* was one of the first AGMs awarded in 1922.

And your favourite newly AGM-awarded plant? *Roscoea humeana* 'Harvington Raw Silk'.

What is your top gardening tip? Plant at the right depth – more trees and shrubs are killed by deep planting than anything else; use **air pots** or tease out the root system when planting; use mycorrhiza when planting; make sure the root system is thoroughly watered both prior to and after planting; make sure the plant is firmed in the soil at planting.

Who would you most like to have dinner with? 'Capability' Brown and plant hunter Ernest 'Chinese' Wilson, thus creating an interesting debate on whether Brown would be using the latest plant introductions from China in his inspirational landscapes.

Not a lot of people know this about me... I enjoy Blues music. I briefly played the **washboard** at college with the Jolly Jug Band.

- Look out for the AGM logo on plant labels at nurseries. Using the Plant Selector on the RHS website is a key tool and AGM plants are searchable by characteristics including whether they are good for shade, specific flowering time, flower colour, etc – apps.rhs.org.uk/plantselector

GROW YOUR OWN

Cold comfort vegetables

Two new collections from Suttons Seeds will ensure winter crops. 'Cut & Come Again Winter Veg', includes 18 plug plants each of Cavalo Nero and kale Fizz, plus seeds of pea Twinkle (for young shoots); and 'Cut & Come Again Winter Salad' – 18 plugs each of chard Rainbow Mix and lettuce mix, with rocket Pegasus seeds. Order by end of August. £8.99 each, or £13.99 for both. Tel 0844 922 0606, www.suttons.co.uk

Diary

• The Oudolf's open garden
Planting experts Piet and Anja Oudolf are opening their garden – 4 August to 13 October, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturday, 11am-4pm. Also note their forthcoming special weekend opening 1-2 September including sales from tree and shrub grower BULK and bulb expert Rita van der Zalm. Broekstraat 17, 6999 DE, Hummelo, The Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)314 381120, www.oudolf.com

• Shrewsbury Flower Show
This year celebrating 125 years. Trade stands, arena activities, expert appearance from Chris Beardshaw and nursery displays. 10-11 August, tickets from £10-£24, 10am-7pm. Quarry Park, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1RN. Tel 01743 234050, www.shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk

• Woburn Abbey Garden Show.
Over 90 exhibitors, full programme of talks and demonstrations, family gardening activities plus the Abbey gardens themselves to enjoy. 18-19 August, 10am-last entry 5pm. £8.95 (discount if booked in advance). Tel 01525 290333, www.woburn.co.uk

• Bristol Botanic Gardens Summer Art Exhibition
Display and sale of original botanical art by noted local artists ranging in style from paintings, drawings, prints and cards. 25-27 August, 10am-5pm, £3.50. University of Bristol Botanic Garden, The Holmes, Stoke Park Road, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1JG. Tel 0117 331 4906, www.bris.ac.uk/botanic-garden

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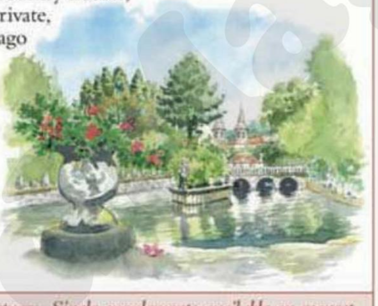
Price from £1,989 per person for seven nights including six performances and all dinners. Departs 16 October 2012

GARDENS & GASTRONOMY OF GALICIA

Pilgrims have been coming to Santiago de Compostela for centuries but few venture beyond the city, where an area of outstanding natural beauty awaits.

Spring comes very early to Galicia where the climate is ideal for those exotic early-flowering species such as camellias and magnolias, yet the region has much to offer garden lovers at other times of year. We stay at two historic paradors - four nights at the Parador Los Reyes de los Catolicos in Santiago de Compostela and three nights at the Parador de Cambados. We will visit several country houses, known as pazos, most of them private, and spend a day exploring Santiago de Compostela - the great pilgrimage centre with its impressive cathedral. We will also enjoy sampling the region's famous food and wine.



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The Long Border at Great Dixter offers 65 metres of ideas and inspiration at all times of year.

DATE
12 November 2012
HELD AT
Great Dixter, near Hastings, East Sussex
PROGRAMME
9.45am Arrival and coffee
10am Welcome and talk by Fergus Garrett on 'Succession Planting'
12.45pm Lunch with champagne from Taittinger
1.45pm Garden tours
4.30pm Tea in the nursery

CHAMPAGNE
TAITTINGER
Reims

Succession plan

Great Dixter's head gardener Fergus Garrett shares his ideas on how and what to plant to ensure you get colour throughout the year

Using the inspirational Long Border as an example, Fergus Garrett will talk you through how to plan and put into practice a long-season scheme. You'll look at using structural plants, the underplanting and interplanting of bulbs, the use of self-sowers, including pockets of bedding, masking with climbers and overall good maintenance to ensure success.

Held in the magnificent timber-framed Great Hall, the day begins with an illustrated talk in the morning. After lunch you'll be given a guided a tour round the different areas of the garden, which will reveal just how good they continue to look late in the season.

The gardens at Great Dixter were made famous by its late owner Christopher Lloyd who gardened here all his life. Much of the original landscaping was by Lutyens and the gardens reflected the Arts and Crafts aesthetic but when Christopher took the gardens on

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12 NOVEMBER

CAROL CASSELDEN

ting at Great Dixter

from his parents, he introduced a more exuberant and experimental style of gardening both in terms of plant choice and combinations. As such, Great Dixter remains one of the most influential gardens in the world.

PLUS Your ticket includes a 10 per cent discount on plant sales made on the day at the Great Dixter nursery.

HEAD GARDENER
FERGUS GARRETT
As an expert plantsman and gardener, Fergus Garrett continues to garden at Great Dixter in the spirit of innovation for which its late owner Christopher Lloyd was known and loved.

Tickets cost £100

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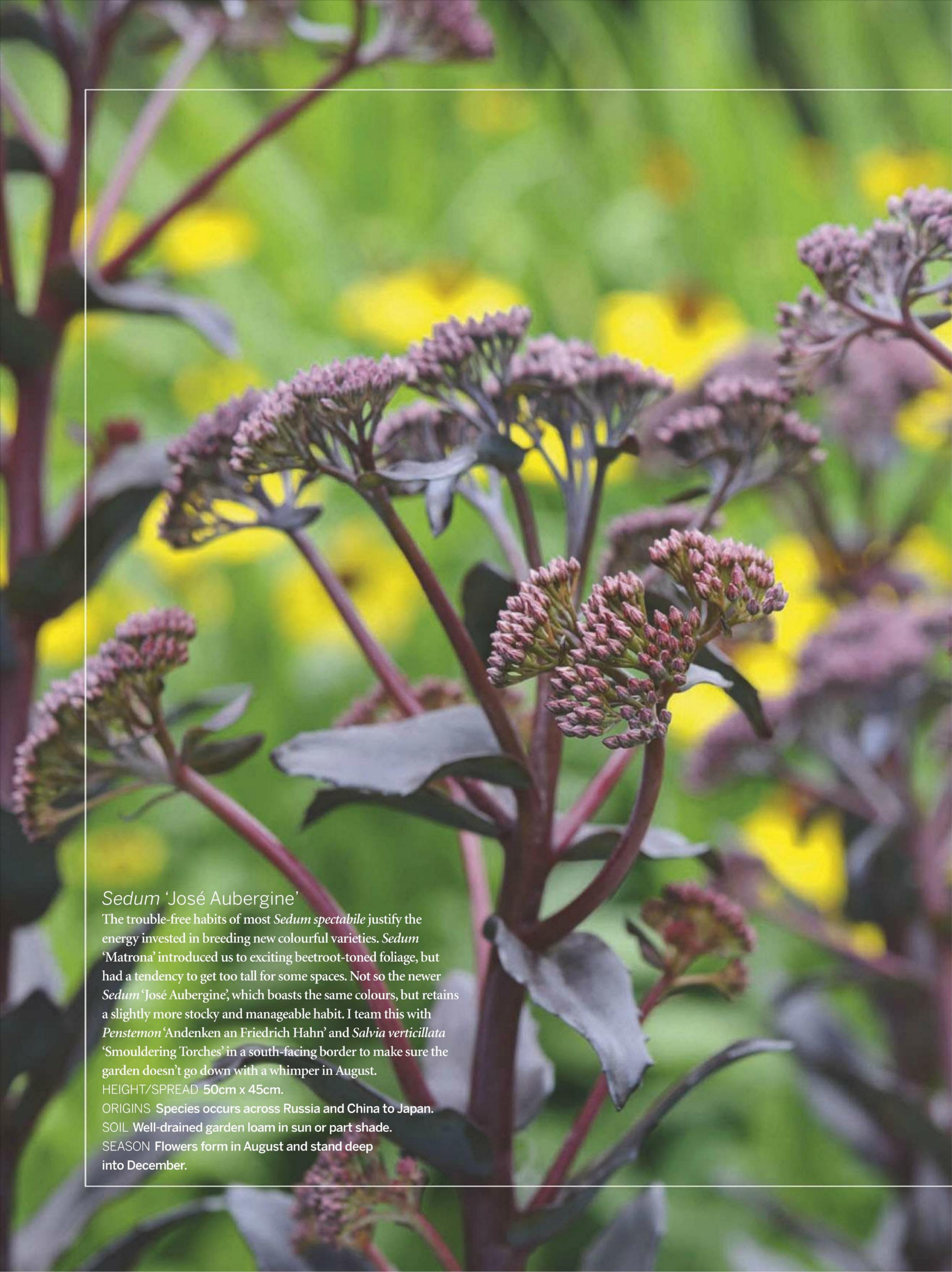
Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event.
Places are limited so booking is essential.
Please advise us of any dietary requirements or accessibility queries.

*Calls to this number from a BT landline will cost no more than 5p per minute. Calls from mobiles and other providers may vary. For more details about the day itself call Great Dixter on 01797 252878 or go to www.greatdixter.co.uk/events.htm



Sedum 'José Aubergine'

The trouble-free habits of most *Sedum spectabile* justify the energy invested in breeding new colourful varieties. *Sedum* 'Matrona' introduced us to exciting beetroot-toned foliage, but had a tendency to get too tall for some spaces. Not so the newer *Sedum* 'José Aubergine', which boasts the same colours, but retains a slightly more stocky and manageable habit. I team this with *Penstemon* 'Andenken an Friedrich Hahn' and *Salvia verticillata* 'Smouldering Torches' in a south-facing border to make sure the garden doesn't go down with a whimper in August.

HEIGHT/SPREAD **50cm x 45cm.**

ORIGINS **Species occurs across Russia and China to Japan.**

SOIL **Well-drained garden loam in sun or part shade.**

SEASON **Flowers form in August and stand deep into December.**

August plants

Nine plants to add colour, form and fauna to your borders as you enjoy those last long lazy days of summer

WORDS **CHRIS MARCHANT** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

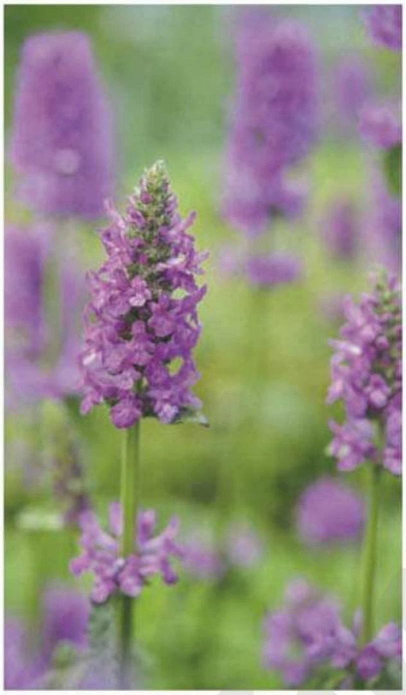
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

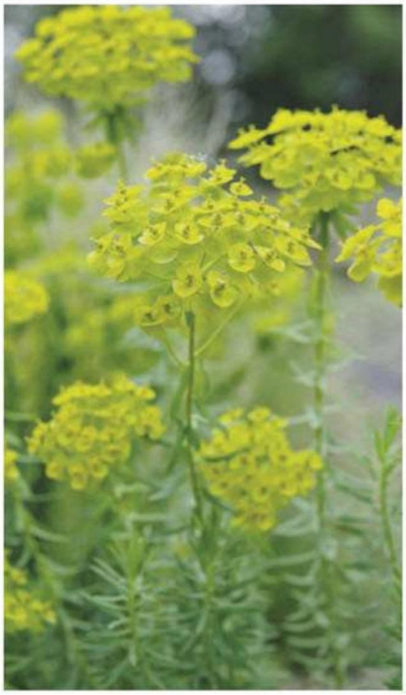
Chris Marchant is co-owner of Orchard Dene Nurseries in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, a wholesale grower specialising in hardy herbaceous plants

Stachys officinalis 'Hummelo'

A frequent host to clouds of butterflies, this is a versatile and tolerant plant, which will flower in spite of thin and poor soil conditions. Tightly formed rosy purple blooms, not dissimilar to our native early purple orchid, will stand tall for many weeks, their finished height dependent on moisture levels and nutrient. I have used plants with equal success in the midst of a low-maintenance shrub framework and on the edge of an informal damp meadow. Try partnering with forms of *Origanum laevigatum* to draw even more insects.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 50cm x 50cm.
ORIGINS Europe and north Africa.
SOIL Prefers a well-drained warm soil, but is tolerant of low nutrient soils.
SEASON June to August with potential for a second flush in September to October.





Euphorbia seguieriana subsp. *niciciana*

Good or bad, the front row of any border makes a lasting impression, which is why you need well-behaved subjects for this high-profile role. This *Euphorbia* erupts each spring with a nest of slender stems bearing needled grey-green foliage. Characteristic flower bracts of acid yellow offer strident contrast to any neighbouring plant and form organised mounded hummocks. Plants need only a brisk trim over in late October to ensure a shapely and plentiful display the following year.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 40cm x 45cm.
ORIGINS Found in many places, from Europe to northwestern China.
SOIL Demands well-drained light soil in full sun.
SEASON May to September.

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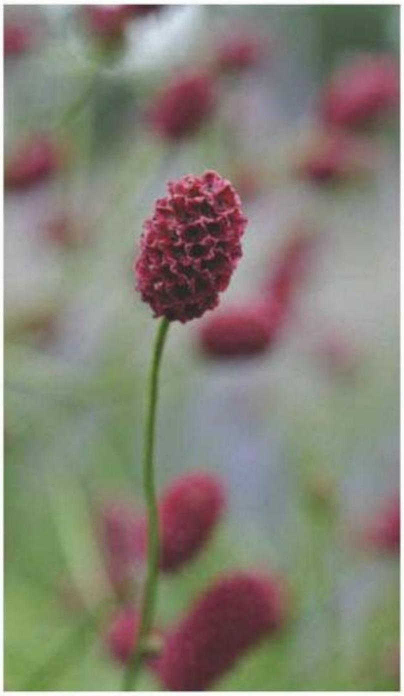


Sanguisorba officinalis 'Arnhem'

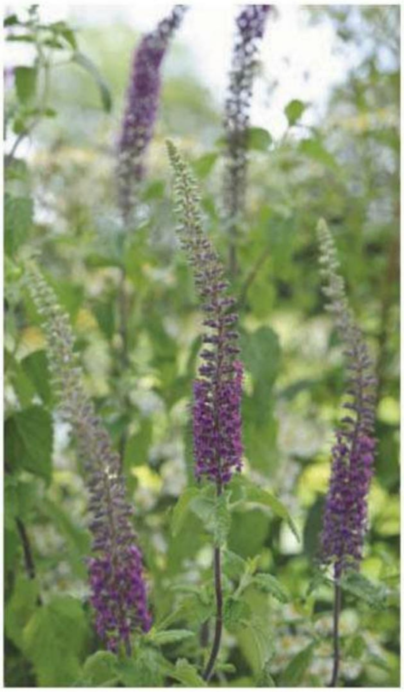
Strong upright stems are important to take the weight when plentiful flowers are formed in July and August. The sprays of button-like maroon, ovoid flowers bring movement and lightness to a late summer border, and make a good partnership with taller *Molinia* varieties. Sadly, we have found all sanguisorbas to be particularly attractive to deer during early growth stages. We now encase young plants in twig cages to fend off attack at this most critical point when they might present a tasty meal for cloven-hoofed diners.

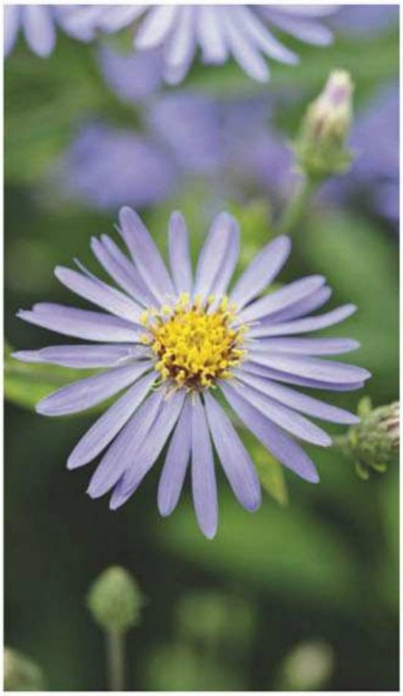
HEIGHT/SPREAD 180-200cm x 55cm.
ORIGINS Species native to northern temperate areas.
SOIL Moisture-retentive nutrient-rich soil.
SEASON July to August.

Teucrium hircanicum 'Paradise Delight'

Standing over an expansive planting of this *Teucrium* in flower, brings to mind a host of firework sparklers. Each stem supports an elongated lime green spike, opening to rosy purple flowers from the base upwards. I turn to this plant in massed border plantings to provide structure and texture into the winter months. Spurning stakes, and demanding no special pruning, the effect is both impressive and easy. Be sure to leave spent flower heads standing through winter frosts to give overwintering garden birds a pit-stop meal.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 55cm x 45cm.
ORIGINS Northern Europe.
SOIL Most fertile garden loams.
SEASON July to October.





Aster x herveyi (previously *Aster macrophyllus* 'Twilight')

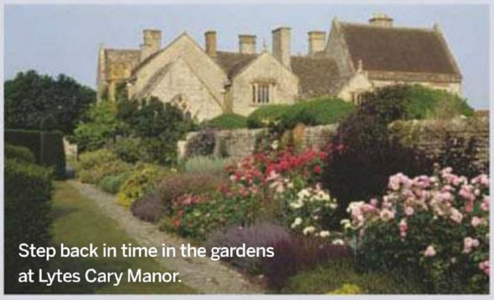
Asters, in their many guises, extend our enjoyment of flowering effect through the shortening days to autumn. This one in particular gives maximum pleasure with minimal effort. Tolerant of sun or light shade, it used to be known as *Aster macrophyllus* 'Twilight', and it certainly lives up to that name. Strong upright stems require no staking, holding aloft flat-headed clusters of single daisies in azure blue. The plant is equally at home in formal arrangement or casual disarray, and makes a worthy contribution to the late-summer garden.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 65cm x 35cm.
ORIGINS North America.
SOIL Any good garden loam.
SEASON August to early October.

Places to visit

Chris Marchant names some of her favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best.

As the season ripens, I am drawn to gardens that boast a productive orchard. **Lytes Cary Manor** in Somerset was formerly the home of herbalist Henry Lyte, and still houses his 16th-century plant directory 'Lytes Herbal'. The Grade II listed house and Arts and Craft-style garden were rescued from dereliction in the early 20th century by Sir Walter Jenner. Imposing long herbaceous borders have been replanted to an original Graham Stuart Thomas design, and good examples of Elizabethan-style topiary and outdoor rooms lead you through the space. Step into the secreted old orchards where medlars and quince trees stand decked with forming fruit and you can



NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES/NICK MEERS

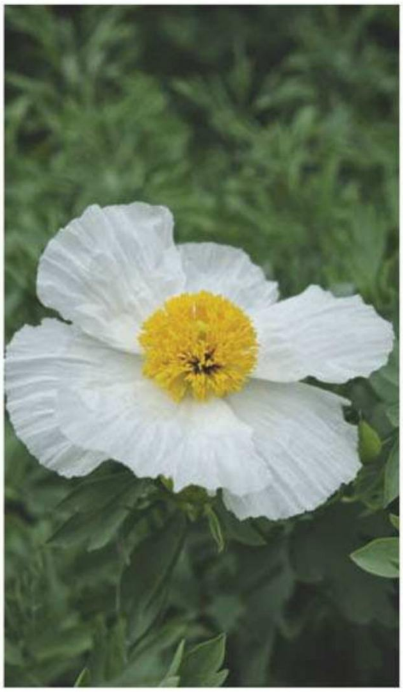
Step back in time in the gardens at Lytes Cary Manor.

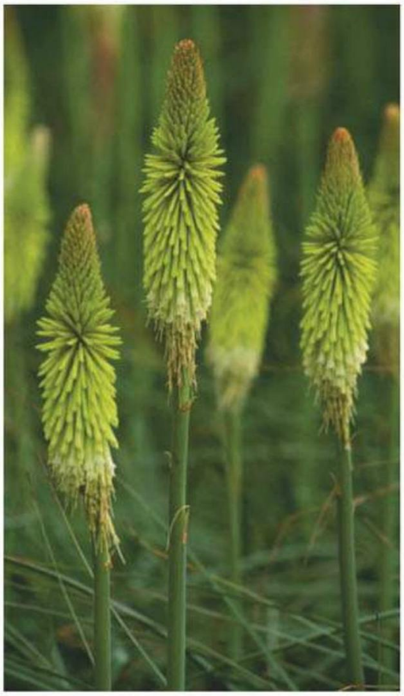
Romneya coulteri

It may take a year or two, but once established, this plant has remarkable vigour. So much so, I have watched it emerge from under the foundations of a wall to sprout triumphant on the sunnier side. Fragile crinkled, papery flowers, the size of a saucer, enfold golden stamens, which belie its iron constitution. In appearance, one cannot help but think of a host of fried eggs.

There is a perfect partnership between *Romneya coulteri* and a fine-walled garden, but even if you have just a small section of brick, it will be all the finer for the addition of this plant.

HEIGHT/SPREAD Unchecked 200cm x 200cm and spreading. Edit to required size.
ORIGINS Native of southern California.
SOIL Well-drained neutral to alkaline loam.
SEASON July to August.





HOWARD RICE / GETTY IMAGES

Kniphofia 'Green Jade'

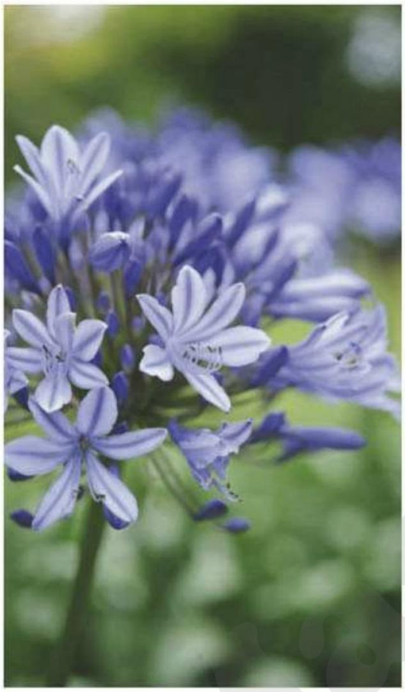
Raised and introduced by Beth Chatto, this plant really rises to the occasion when borders begin to look rather dry and forlorn. Its elegant profile has great architectural strength, requiring no staking if nutrient levels are kept lean. The effect offers interesting contrast when threaded through some of the ripening mid-height grasses, such as *Panicum virgatum*, or *Calamagrostis brachytricha*. The pale green colour, fading to creamy white is incredibly versatile, and can be used to form a cooler bridge between the many fiery reds and oranges of late summer.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 120cm x 45cm.
ORIGINS Species found in mountains and upland grasslands of South Africa.
SOIL Well-drained soil in full sun.
SEASON End August through September.

Agapanthus praecox

There is some confusion over the naming of this plant, which was originally sold to us as *Agapanthus africanus*. Agapanthus experts have advised it was more correctly a *praecox* type. Either way, it is best used in a pot and moved into a double-skinned polytunnel for winter protection from end October until May. Small price to pay for the glorious display of blue spherical flowers, which are held above the broad strappy foliage, and replaced by beautifully structured seed heads in butter yellow.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 100cm x 50cm.
ORIGINS Southern Africa.
SOIL Needs a moisture-retentive, nutrient-rich soil.
SEASON Flowers in July with attractive seed heads through into September.



almost believe that time has spun back 400 years. Lytes Cary Manor, Charlton Mackrell, Somerton TA11 7HU. Tel 01458 224471 www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

There are more orchards at **Waterperry Gardens** in Oxfordshire, where lines of old-fashioned fruiting varieties peel off into the distance. Come back in autumn for Apple Weekend, (5-7 October) when you can bring up to three examples of garden fruit for variety identification. Waterperry Gardens, nr Wheatley, Oxon OX33 1JZ. Tel 01844 339254 www.waterperrygardens.co.uk

Once considered one of the most innovative gardens of the 19th century, **Biddulph Grange** in Staffordshire has been rediscovered and restored by the National Trust. The 15-acre garden boasts many design features, but of particular merit at this point in the season, is the splendid dahlia walk, which is brimming with more than 600 dahlias. Grange Road, Biddulph, Staffordshire ST8 7SD. Tel 01782 517999 www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Enjoy the glorious dahlia walk at Biddulph Grange.

DEREK HARRIS / ALAMY

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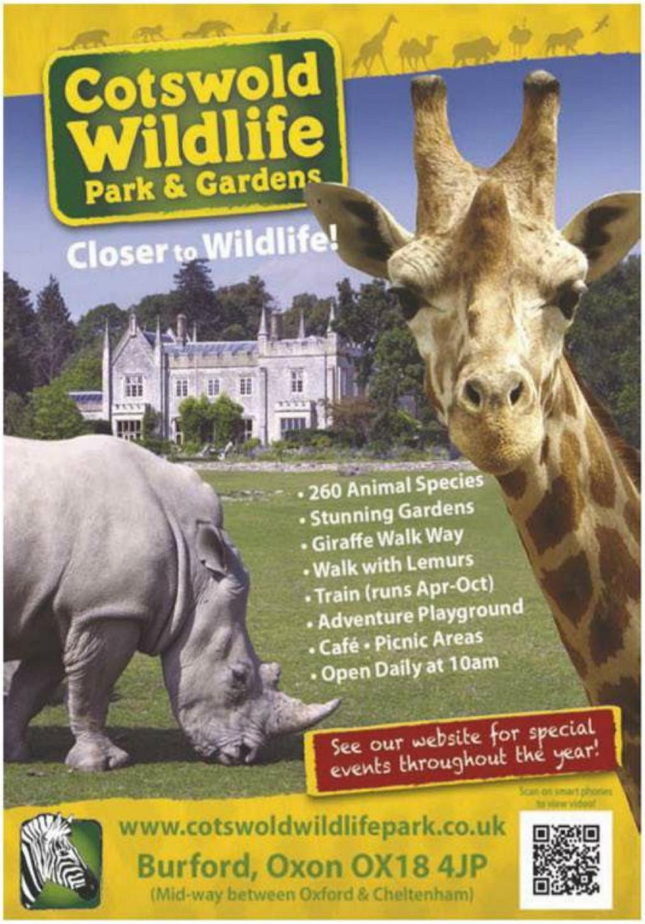

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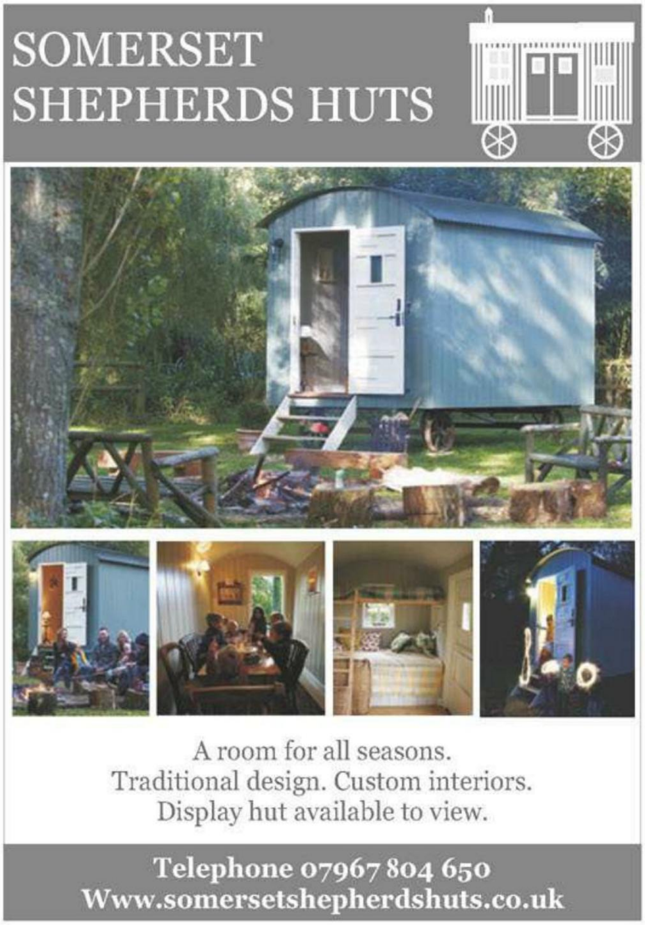

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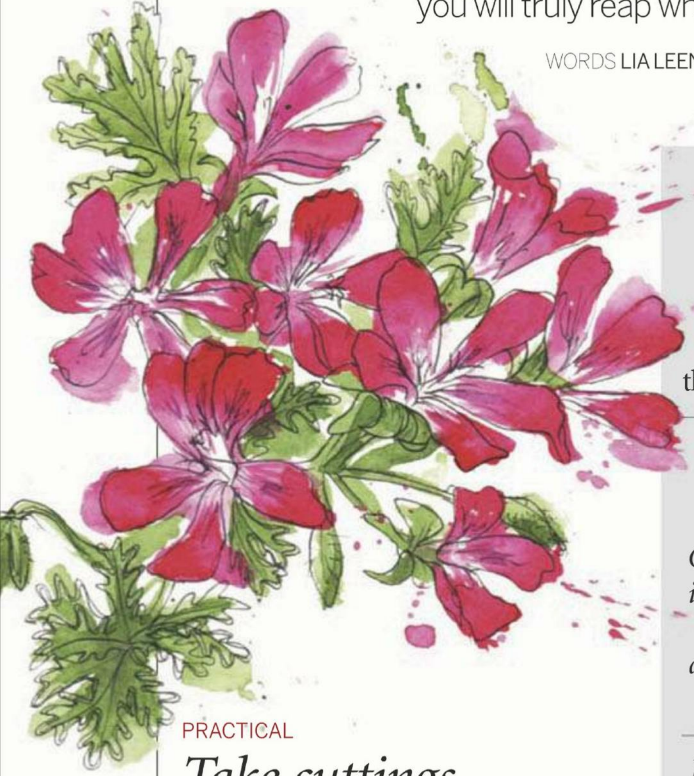
Ripe pickings

The dog days of August are here. This is a moment for lazing and surveying, and occasionally wafting yourself with a fan, but this is also the month in which you will truly reap what you have sown. Enjoy the bounty

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ ILLUSTRATION GEORGINA LUCK



PRACTICAL

Take cuttings of summer bedding plants

This is the moment to survey your scented and bedding pelargoniums and decide which ones you've fallen in love with enough to want to preserve in perpetuity. For me, this year it is a cerise-flowered stray, bought from a market stall. It may not have a name but I love it all the same. Take lots of cuttings a few inches tall, removing the lower leaves, and push them into gritty compost. Over winter keep some in a just-heated greenhouse and, if you can, some on the kitchen windowsill to give yourself a chance of seeing them again next summer.

THINGS TO DO

If you haven't got much time, just do these essential tasks…

Test sweet corn for ripeness by piercing a kernel. Clear liquid means it is unripe while milky means just right. A doughy kernal means it is too far gone.

Feed pumpkins and squash with liquid seaweed or comfrey for monster autumn fruits.

Stop vine weevils munching on plant roots with Nemasys Vine Weevil Killer, an organic treatment from www.greengardener.co.uk.

Cut summer raspberry and hybrid berry canes to the ground as soon as they have fruited, and tie in younger canes, which will fruit next year.

THREE OF THE BEST

Plants for edible seeds

Many plants start to run to seed this month but don't be downhearted. Allow them to ripen and harvest for use in the kitchen, or just save them and sow next year.

Caraway

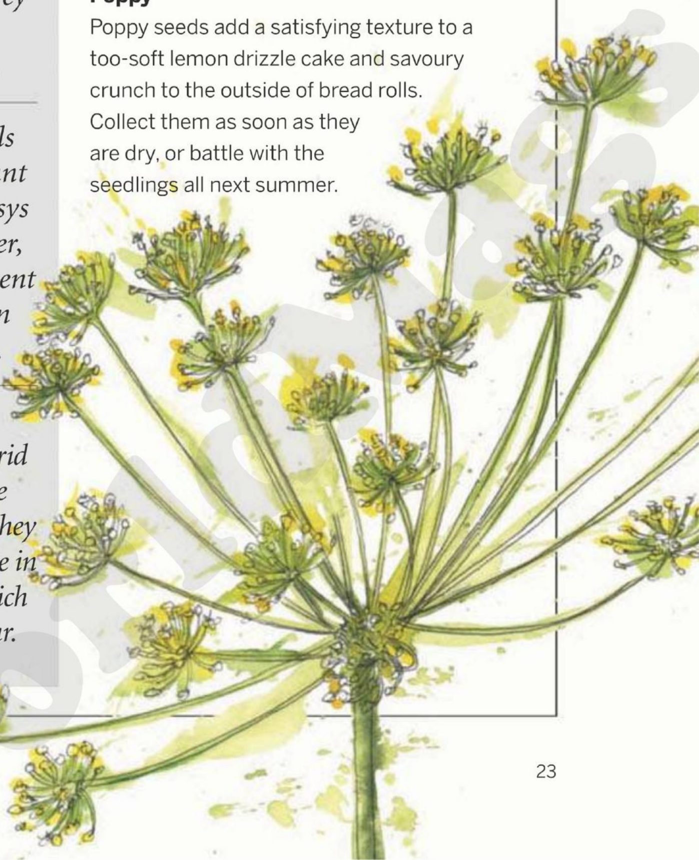
After white, cow parsley-like flowers come aniseed-flavoured seeds that are good in savoury breads and even better as an unusual note in sweet cakes. Use sparingly though; a little is delicious but overdo it and the flavour turns unpleasant.

Dill

Cut whole heads while the seeds are still slightly green and use to flavour pickled gherkins and cucumbers. Dried seeds are great in potato salads and can make a tasty addition to curries.

Poppy

Poppy seeds add a satisfying texture to a too-soft lemon drizzle cake and savoury crunch to the outside of bread rolls. Collect them as soon as they are dry, or battle with the seedlings all next summer.



little green fingers
getting children hooked on gardening

My Book - Available Here

« Over-sized sunhats, cake and catching the light | Main | Narcissism, Risky Business and Jam Jar Garden Lights »

June 12, 2012

NGS open gardens, flying gazebos and Sylvanian hunts

So we survived our first NGS opening relatively unscathed.

In all honesty I would have liked more visitors, but considering we were all wrapped up in jumpers and one person was designated the role of 'holding onto the gazebo so it doesn't

Signed Copies of Book: Only £12 (incl UK P+P)

Dawn Isaac Garden Design Services

READ THIS

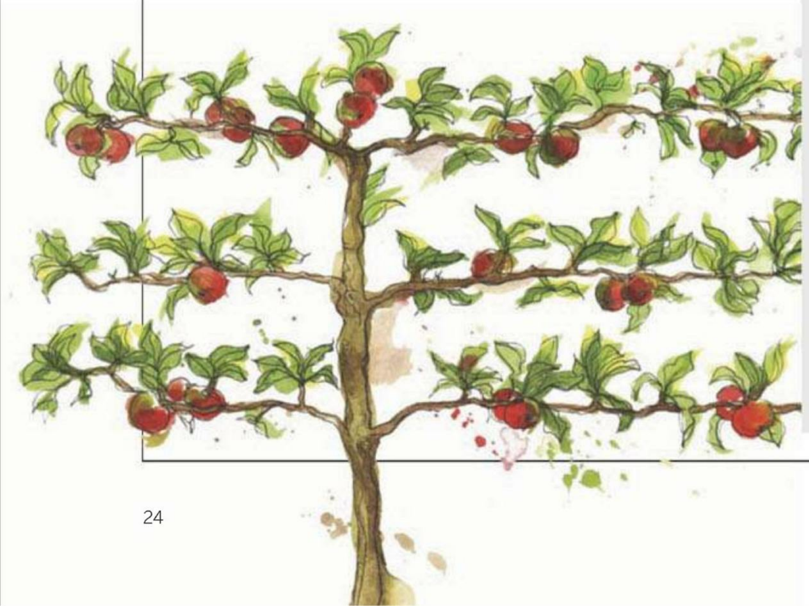
Little green goddess

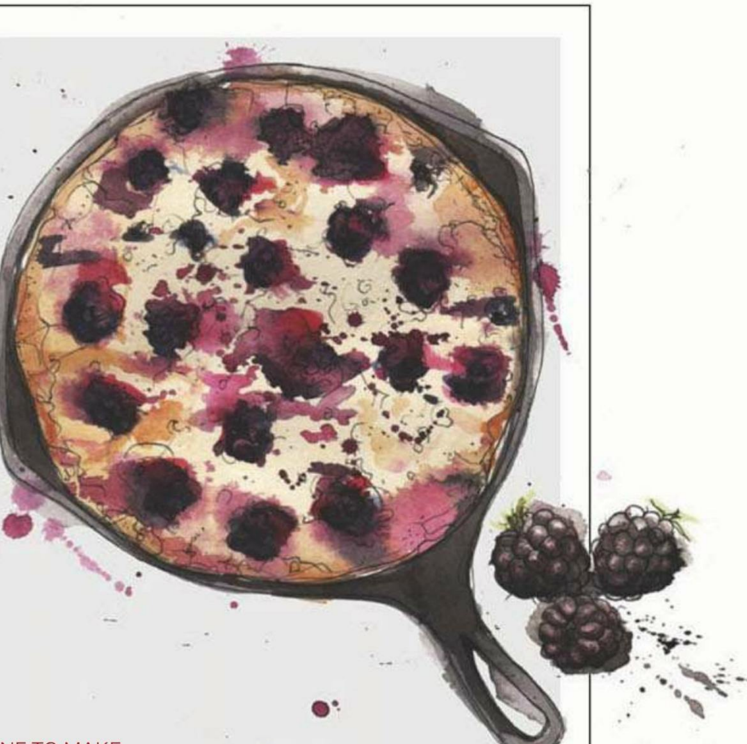
August can mean a lot of children in the garden, invariably hot, bored and looking for trouble. I take a fairly grumpy approach to kids in the garden (if they can't make their own fun in a garden, what can they do?), but even I am wooed by the ideas in Dawn Isaac's book *Garden Crafts for Children*. Fairy rings of crocuses that magically pop up each year and a mini farm, planted with micro-leaves are just two of the many ideas my children would love. Dawn also has a very funny blog: **www.littlegreenfingers.com**.

PRACTICAL

Tying in and pruning trained fruit

Espaliers, stepovers, fans and cordons grow wayward, and now is time to bring them back into line. After harvesting fan-trained nectarines and peaches, completely remove the old, fruited branches; flowers and fruit will only be produced on new growth so tie in last year's new shoots for next year's fruit. Apricots, cherries and plums should have some of the oldest shoots removed too. On all of these, completely remove shoots growing in towards the wall, and shorten side shoots to around three leaves. Apples and pears are different and fruit on old wood, so just shorten growth that arises from the main framework back to three leaves.





ONE TO MAKE

Blackberry Dutch baby

The first day of August is the pagan festival of Lammas, the start of the harvest, when the ripening of the first ears of grain was celebrated with the baking of loaves, and when the earliest ripening berries were eaten. Dutch babies – pancakes that are crispy on the edges, gooey on the inside, cooked in the oven like sweet Yorkshire puddings – make a celebratory Lammas breakfast of wheat and berries.

INGREDIENTS
3 eggs
120ml milk
1 vanilla bean, halved and seeded
75g flour
Pinch of salt
½tsp cinnamon
2tbsp butter, melted
Handful of ripe blackberries
Dusting of icing sugar

- Pre-heat the oven to 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7, and butter a 30cm iron skillet.
- Beat the eggs, milk and the seeds of the vanilla pod together then sift in the flour, salt and cinnamon.
- When all is well combined, whisk in the melted butter. Pour into the skillet and sprinkle with the blackberries.
- Bake for 15 minutes, then turn the oven to 170°C/325°F/gas mark 3, and bake for an additional 10 minutes.
- Dust with the icing sugar, instantly. The batter contains no sugar, but the melting icing sugar provides just the right touch of sweetness.

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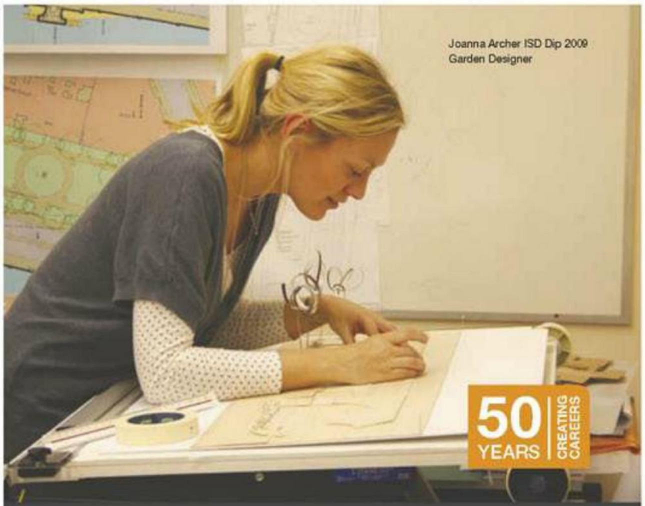
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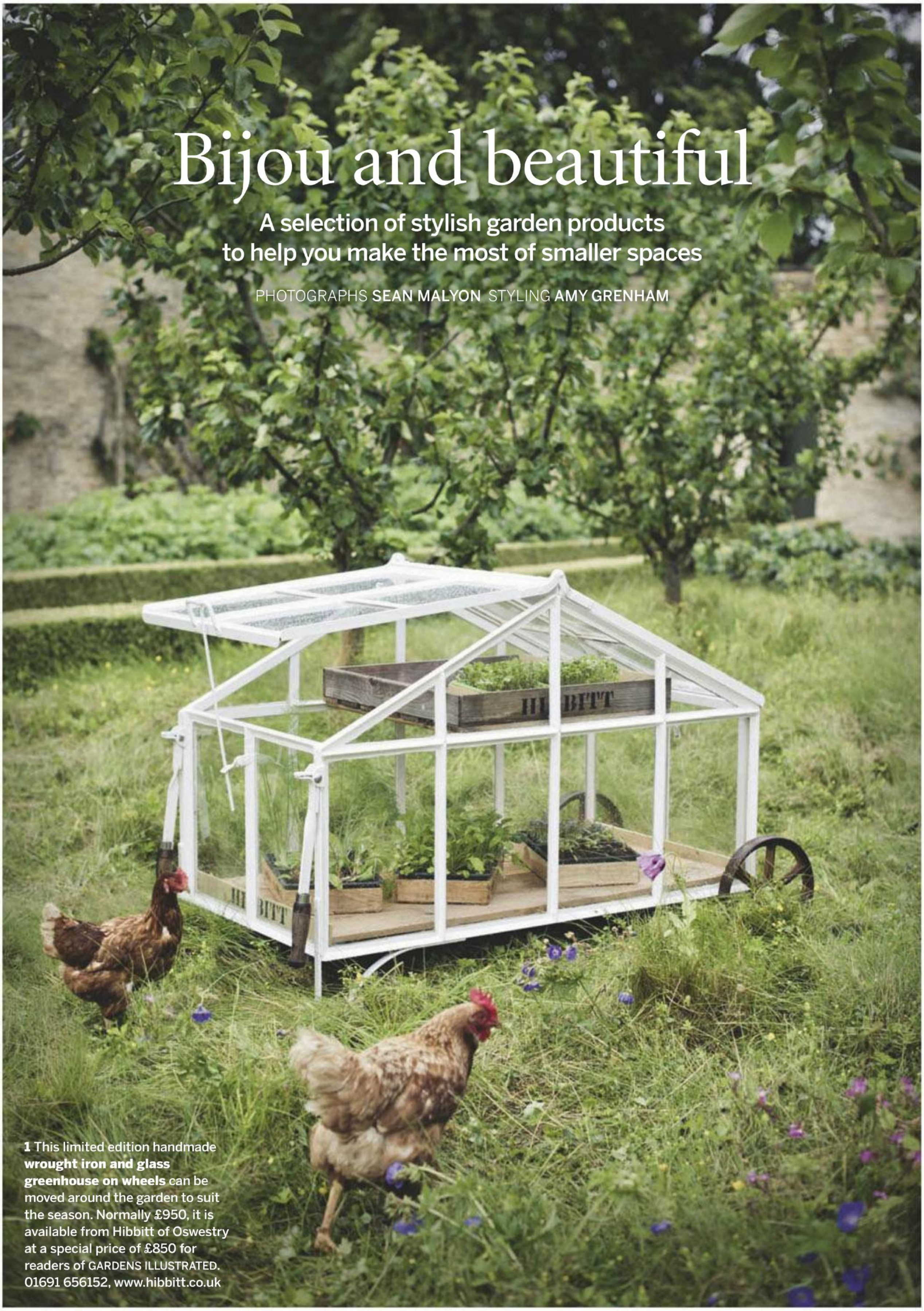
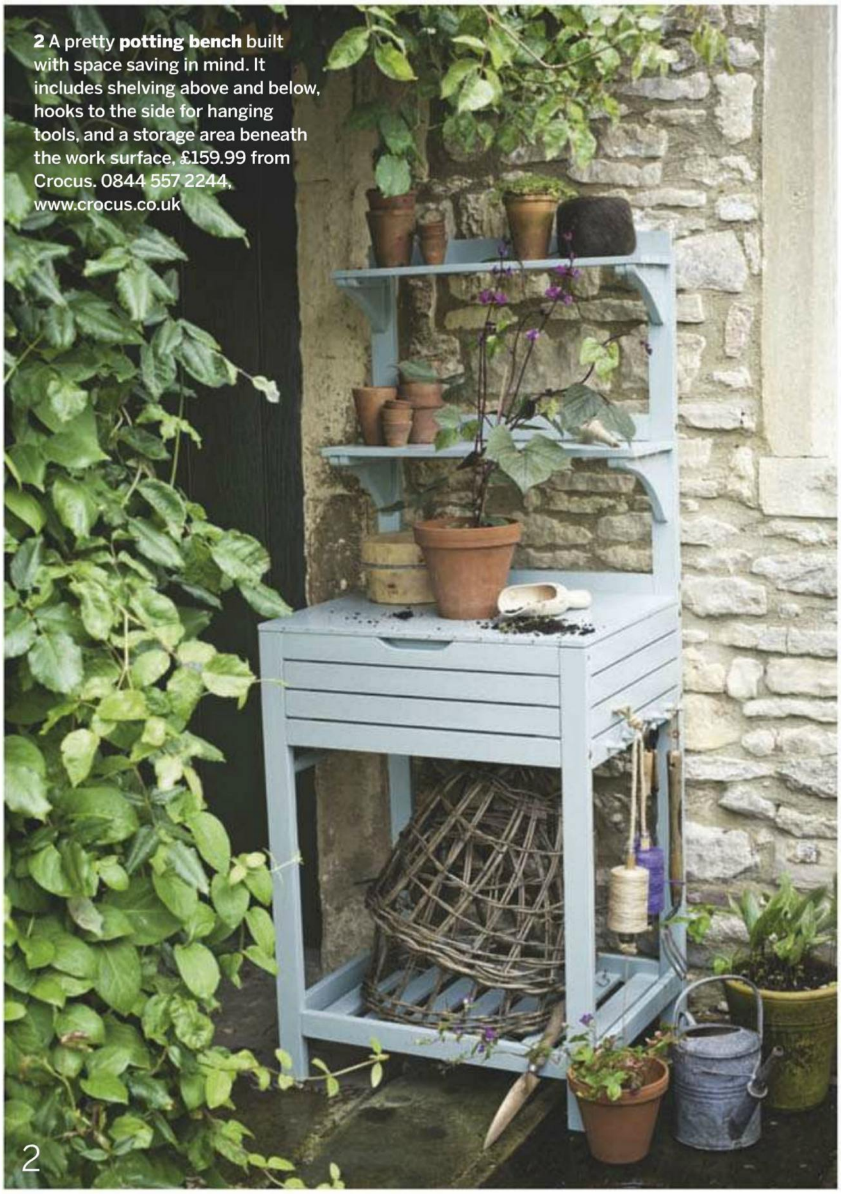
PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **AMY GRENHAM**

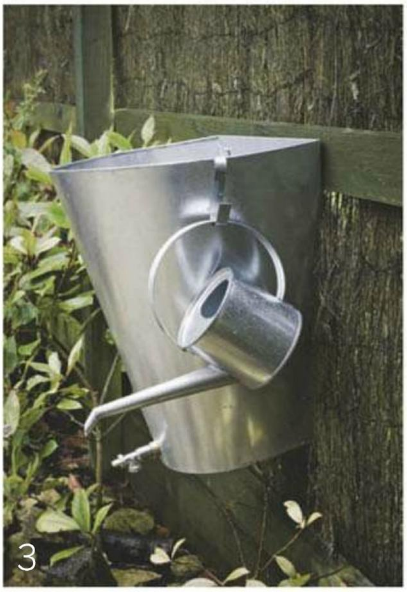


1 This limited edition handmade **wrought iron and glass greenhouse on wheels** can be moved around the garden to suit the season. Normally £950, it is available from Hibbitt of Oswestry at a special price of £850 for readers of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED. 01691 656152, www.hibbitt.co.uk



2

2 A pretty **potting bench** built with space saving in mind. It includes shelving above and below, hooks to the side for hanging tools, and a storage area beneath the work surface, £159.99 from Crocus. 0844 557 2244, www.crocus.co.uk



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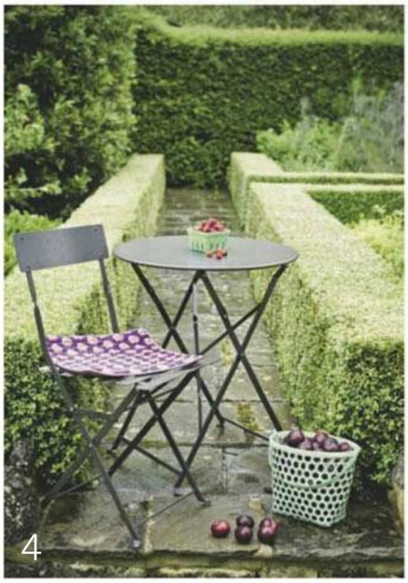

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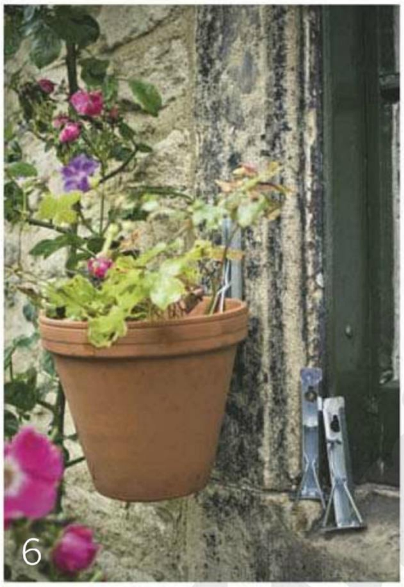
3 With a capacity of 36 litres, this **galvanised steel water butt** is not only the perfect size for a small garden, but will also look pretty hanging on the wall. It comes complete with a 1.5-litre **watering can** and hanging hook, £66 from Garden Trading, 0845 608 4448, www.gardentrading.co.uk

4 Even the smallest outdoor space needs seating. The foldaway 'Coffee Rivo Bistro' **table and two chairs set**, £135, shown with **waterproof cushion**, from £16, comes from The Balcony Gardener, 020 7431 5553, www.thebalconygardener.com. Small green 'Farmer's Market' **stoneware basket** on table, £10 from Anthropologie, 00800 0026 8476, www.anthropologie.eu. Woven **wooden basket with handle**, £9.50 by Forest & Co, 0845 415 4193, www.theforestandco.com

5 Make good use of wall space with this **wall-mounted plant rack**. Made of spruce, the rack will weather beautifully and comes with six galvanised pots, £45 from The Balcony Gardener, as before.

6 Lifting pots off the floor will create extra room. These **plant clips** from De Wiltfang are easy to use and can hold up to 10kg in weight, €3.95 for a pack of five, +31 (0)346 218111, www.dewiltfang.com



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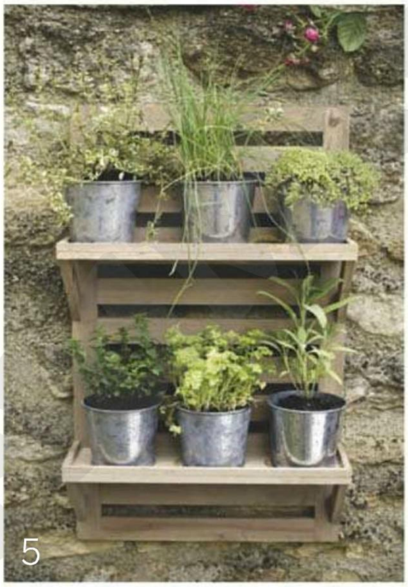

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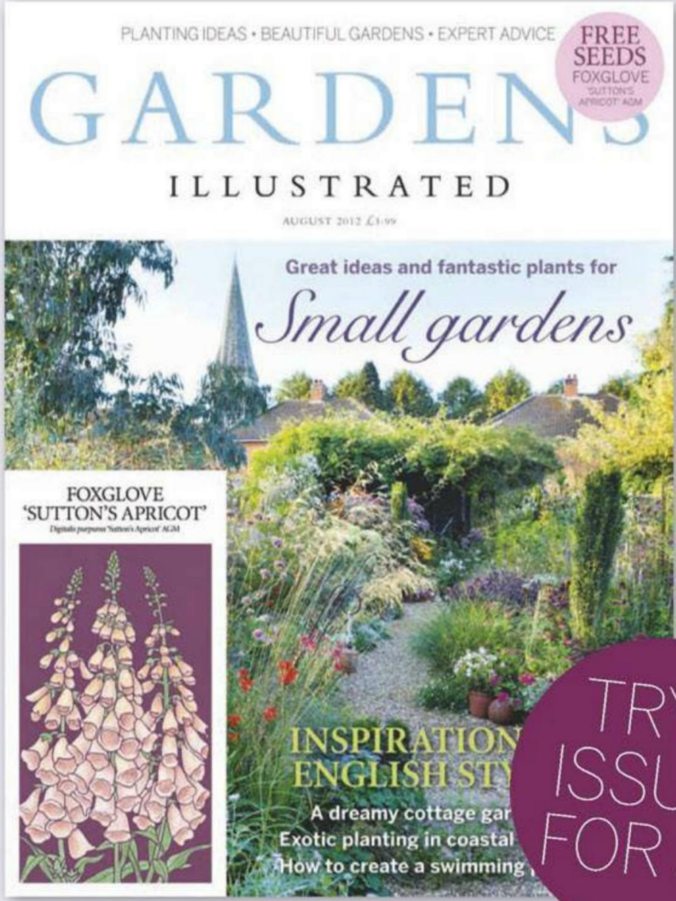
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Small gardens

Five inspirational gardens, each compact in size, and each one tackling a common garden problem when space is tight

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Giving light to hidden charms

Designer Tommaso del Buono has taken a neglected and overlooked London garden and created a calm, secluded space full of colour and style for all seasons

WORDS JODIE JONES PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE MAJERUS

On a hot summer's day in 2009, designer Tommaso del Buono, of design partnership del Buono Gazerwitz, was called to one of London's most exclusive postcodes. Tucked away in a pretty garden square, just a stone's throw from Hyde Park, he found a garden that was unloved, overgrown and overlooked by several tall buildings.

It was not an immediately appealing prospect but Tommaso, like the new owner, could see its potential. "Fortunately it has a very good aspect," he says. "Many town gardens are blighted by shade, but this is a suntrap. If anything, we wanted to create a bit more shade and provide a little privacy by screening the view from neighbouring buildings."

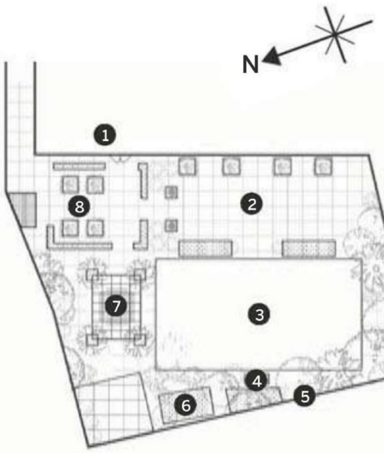
He settled on a grid design with clean lines and strong shapes that create a pleasing pattern when viewed from the upstairs rooms. "This layout was reinforced with clipped box cubes, yew hedging and pleached hornbeams, but the client is a keen gardener, so as a counterpoint we planned informal beds, using many of the shrubs and herbaceous plants found in more traditional country gardens."

The only elements retained from the original garden were an apple tree and a *Viburnum opulus*, and the soil itself. "In London it is common for people to buy in new top soil, but I feel the garden comes with the soil it is meant to have, although we do improve it," says Tommaso.

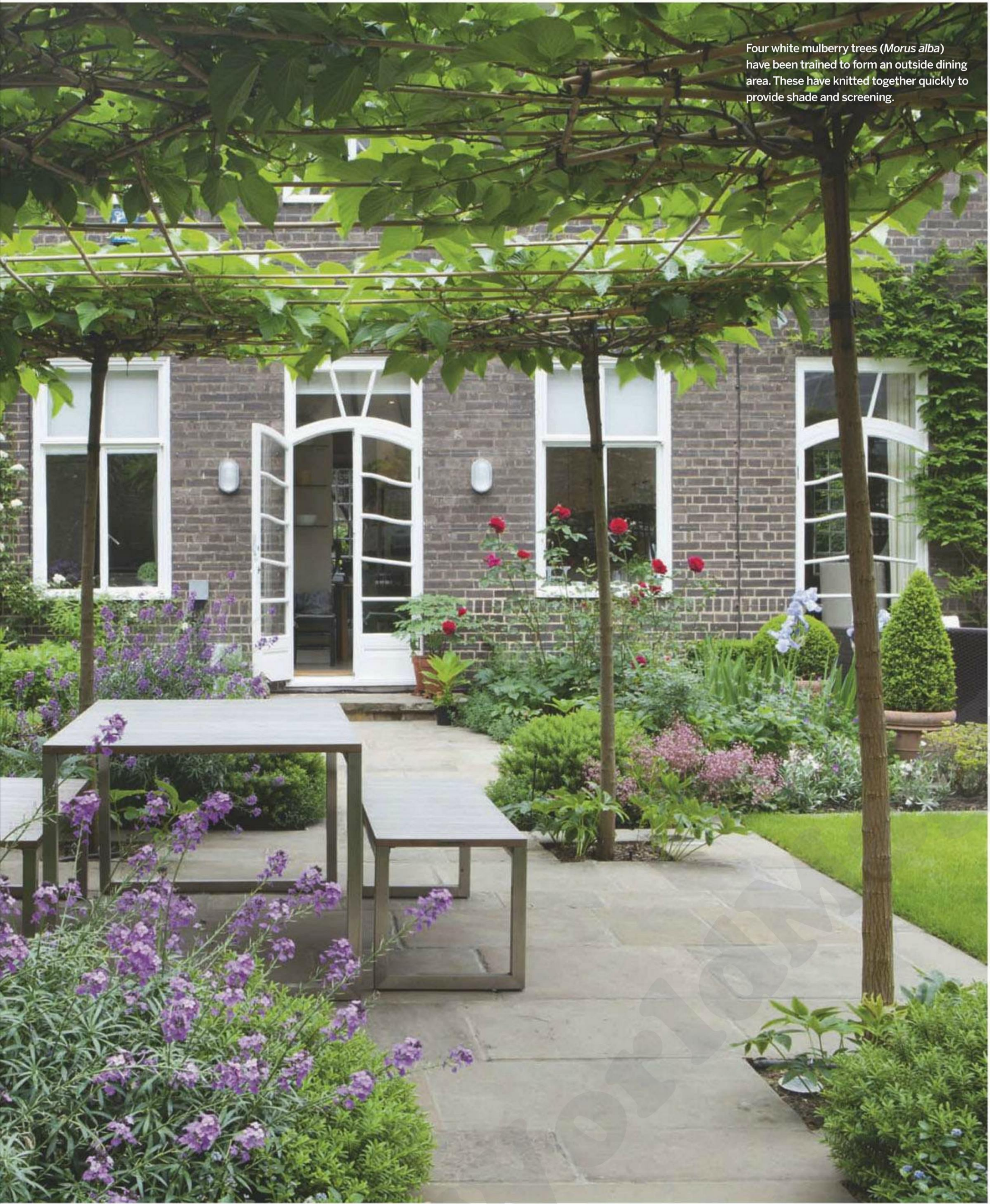
Today, less than three years later, there is a tiny, shaded front garden in restrained, faintly Japanese style, with white cherries, Japanese anemones, camellias, ferns and *Skimmia japonica*. Tommaso designed it as a deliberate contrast to the sunny delights at the rear of the house, which he has transformed into a crisp, contemporary cottage garden. A broad stone terrace contained by a low hedge of lavender leads to an immaculate lawn edged with a ▷

KEY ELEMENTS

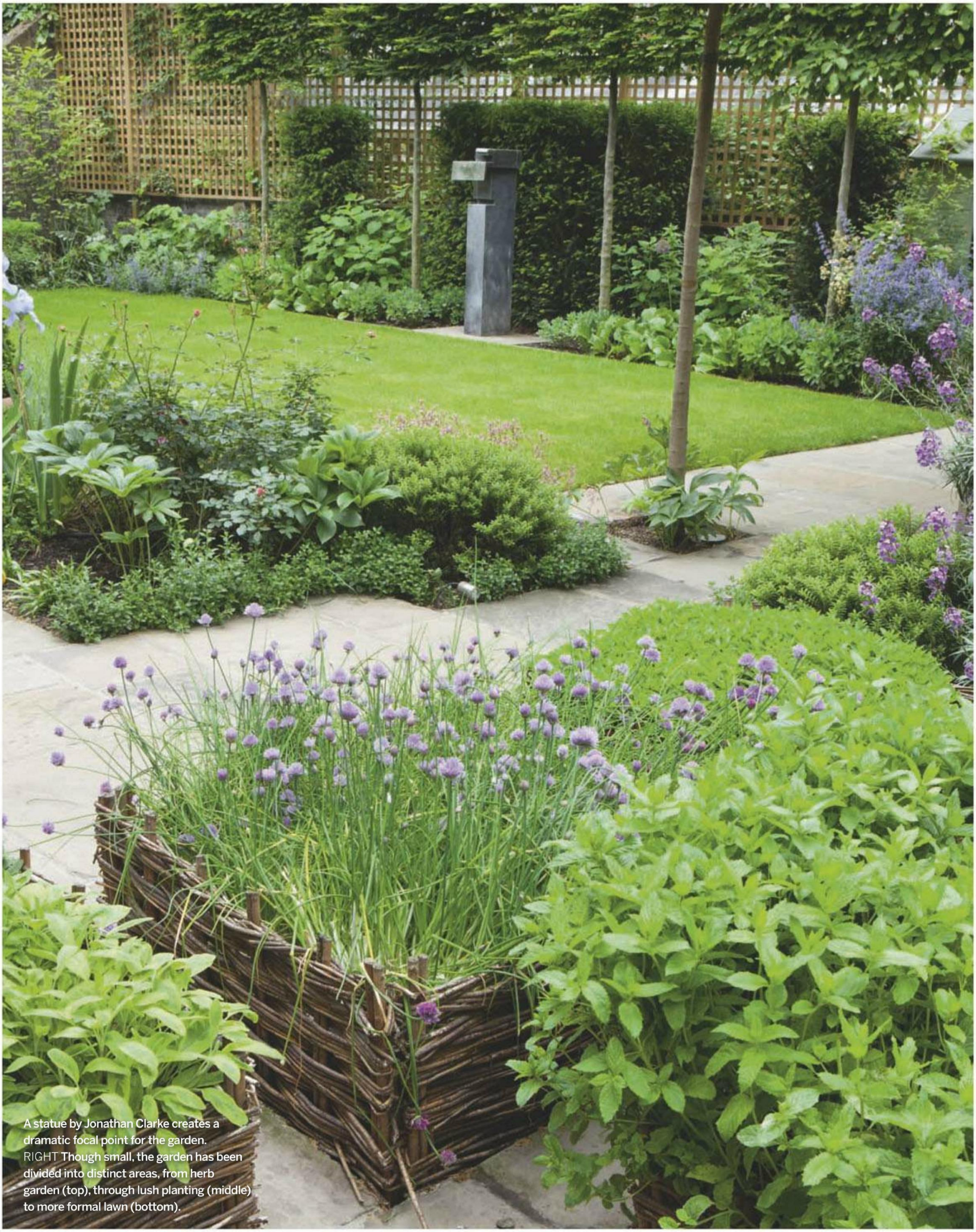
WHAT Private garden.
WHERE Kensington, central London.
SIZE 200 square metres.
SOIL London clay, significantly improved.
SPECIAL FEATURES Overlooked by surrounding buildings, with a mixture of strong sun and some shade.
DESIGNED BY del Buono Gazerwitz (www.delbuono-gazerwitz.co.uk)



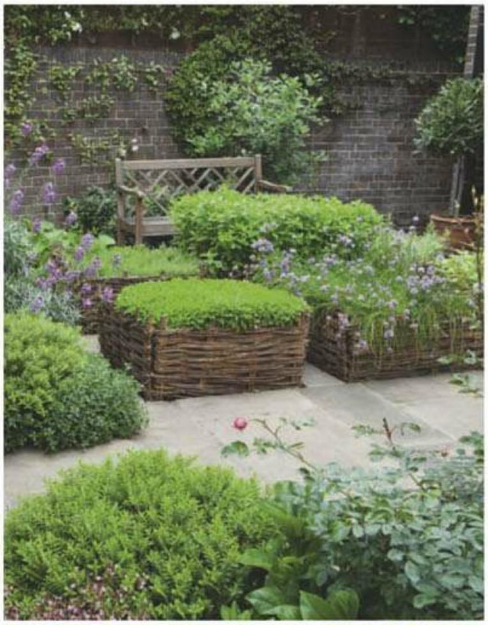
1 House
2 Terrace
3 Lawn
4 Sculpture
5 Screening trellis
6 Shed
7 Dining area
8 Herb garden

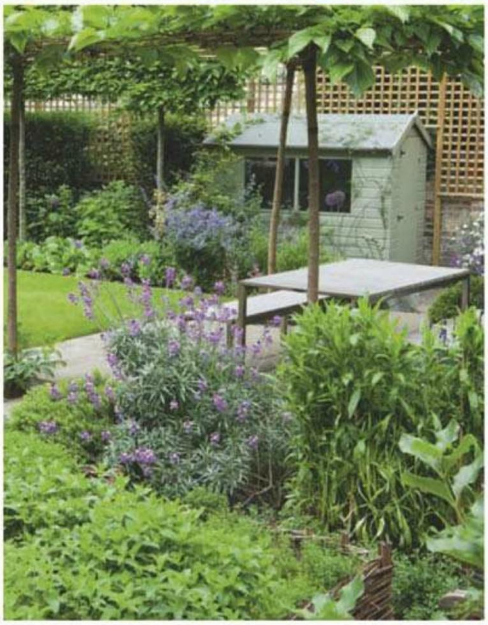


Four white mulberry trees (*Morus alba*) have been trained to form an outside dining area. These have knitted together quickly to provide shade and screening.



A statue by Jonathan Clarke creates a dramatic focal point for the garden. RIGHT Though small, the garden has been divided into distinct areas, from herb garden (top), through lush planting (middle) to more formal lawn (bottom).





> “The combination of formal and informal elements, which is such a feature of this garden, is perfectly encapsulated by the herb garden”

▷ narrow band of the same stone. Pleached hornbeams and a dramatic sculpture by artist Jonathan Clarke mark the end of the garden, and a formal dining area sheltered by four roof-trained mulberries runs down one side.

There is nothing restrained about the surrounding planting, which has been designed for real year-round interest. *Garrya* and hellebores give way to a profusion of bulbs, *Brunnera* and *Erysimum* ‘Bowles’s Mauve’ in spring. The perennial wallflowers then continue their display of lilac flowers as the summer display of *Nepeta*, hardy geraniums and roses gets underway. Japanese anemones and sedums, asters and late-flowering clematis extend the flowering season well into the autumn.

“This garden is just 16m x 14m at its widest points, but even in a small space it is possible to ensure some colour and interest almost all the time,” says Tommaso. “For example, there is a small bed by the main terrace where the crimson English *Rosa* LD Braithwaite (=‘Auscrim’) is the star, but this was underplanted with white *Helleborus orientalis* and masses of tulips, which are followed by fragrant bearded *Iris* ‘Jane Phillips’ and the pretty false mallow *Sidalcea* ‘Elsie Heugh’, with an edging of hardy *Agapanthus* ‘Timaru’ for an extended show.”

The combination of formal and informal elements, which is such a feature of this garden, is perfectly encapsulated by the herb garden that Tommaso set out by the kitchen door, as a take on a traditional potager for the owner, a keen cook.

Raised beds now form a modernist chequerboard in which each square is devoted to a single herb – thyme, mint, tarragon, marjoram, chives and sage – with woven-hurdle edgings that recall cottage-garden perfection.

The rapid establishment of the garden is testament to the benefits of autumn planting, maintains Tommaso. But the way in which it has settled so comfortably into the confines of its space is testament to the importance of good design, as well as good horticulture. ☐

GET THE LOOK

Four ideas to steal from Tommaso del Buono’s contemporary take on a country garden

1 Hurdle-raised beds make a high-impact and relatively low-cost feature, and provide free-draining growing conditions, ideal for culinary herbs. “Even with a membrane liner, hurdles used in this way will deteriorate,” warns Tommaso. “But it is not difficult to replace them.”

2 The shed, bench, chair and garden office windows are all painted in the same soft green paint, ‘Lichen’ from Farrow & Ball. “This calm shade of green harmonises with everything,” says Tommaso.

3 The garden easy chairs, dining table and benches are all from Indian Ocean, and are left out all year round (020 8675 4808, www.indian-ocean.co.uk).

4 Four roof-trained mulberries create a living arbour over the garden eating area. “It is important to choose a sterile mulberry,” says Tommaso. “The fruiting form does not like being trained in this way and falling fruits would stain the paving dreadfully.”

WorldMags

Grand ideas in a small garden

Returning to the house in Canada where she grew up, German-born sculptor Birgit Piskor has transformed her tiny garden into a riot of colour and visual stimulation

WORDS STEVE WHYSALL PHOTOGRAPHS CLARE TAKACS

For Birgit Piskor, gardening has always been about expressing herself artistically. She admits to being focused right from the start on the need to get plants in precisely the right place so as to achieve picture-perfect partnerships of engaging foliage contrasts and attractive colour combinations.

But she had no idea when she started to build a garden that her involvement with plants would ultimately ignite an even deeper passion for sculpture.

"I was totally obsessed from the word go," she says. "Gardening was all I could think about. When the garden was done, I thought it should be perfect, but it wasn't. Something was missing. And I realised that something was sculpture."

Birgit shopped around, but everything she found was either "off-shore, knock-off" or too expensive, so she decided to make something herself. The result was her Big Bottomed Girl series – female figures in black concrete form. These along with more of Birgit's art works now play a prominent role in the garden of her 1908 heritage house in a quiet suburb of Victoria, British Columbia, on Canada's west coast, which had once been her childhood home. But it is the meticulous planting she has done around the house that is the major draw for garden lovers.

Facing southwest, the garden is divided into three main areas: compact borders at the front and on the east side, and a large rectangular area, separated from the house by a small yard, at the back.

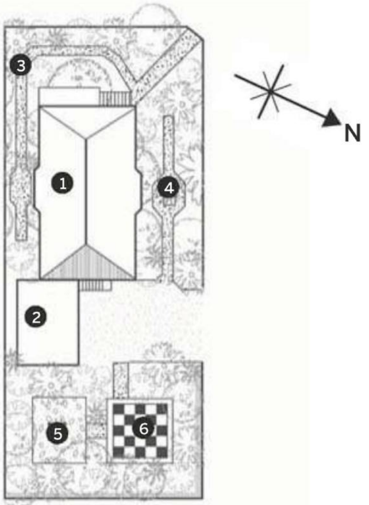
Birgit resisted the urge to build a single path to connect all the garden areas. Instead, she deliberately installed narrow gravel paths that push through flanking borders and come to "a natural dead end" without apology or explanation. Paths are deliberately kept narrow, forcing visitors to gingerly push through flopping foliage and flowers as they make their way around.

A fan of purple foliage, Birgit found space in the front border for *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Purpureum', *Berberis* ▷

Tall wispy yellow *Verbascum chaixii* (nettle-leaved mullein) help draw the gaze upwards.

KEY ELEMENTS

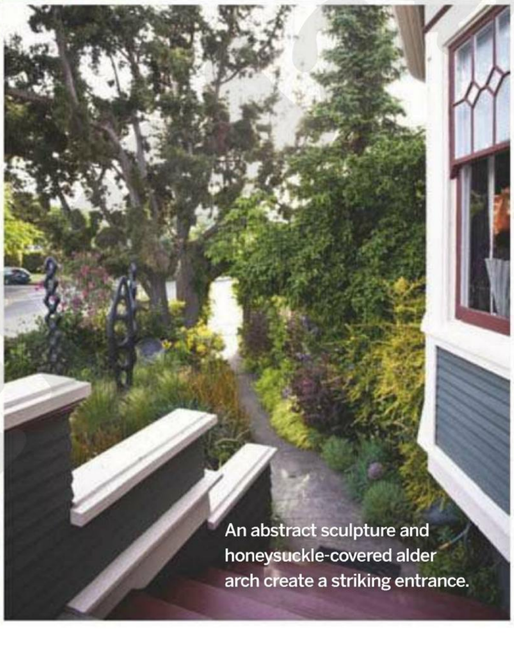
WHAT Flower garden.
WHERE British Columbia, Canada.
SIZE 15m x 45m.
SOIL Acidic.
SPECIAL FEATURES Densely planted suburban garden, highlighted with owner's own sculptures (www.birgitpiskor.com). Open as part of tour via Victorian Tours Ltd (www.victoriangardentours.com)



1 House
2 Studio
3 Dead-end pathway through planting
4 Pebble mosaic
5 Small terrace
6 Checkerboard terrace

Birgit's planting has been inspired both by the late plantsman Christopher Lloyd, who "taught me to be bold and playful", and the Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf.

Birgit's sculptures, like this 'neo-sphere', nestle naturally into her lushly planted borders.



An abstract sculpture and honeysuckle-covered alder arch create a striking entrance.

> *"Paths are deliberately kept narrow, forcing visitors to gingerly push through flopping foliage and flowers as they make their way around"*

▷ *thunbergii* f. *atropurpurea*, *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo' and *Cotinus* 'Grace'.

For colour contrast, she added the yellow foliage of *Lonicera nitida* 'Baggesen's Gold' and flowers of Moroccan broom (*Cytisus battandieri*). She broadened her palette with *Salvia verticillata* 'Purple Rain', orange blades of *Libertia peregrinans*, tan Mexican feather grass (*Stipa tenuissima*) and the silvery leaves of a eucalyptus tree.

On the east side, three evenly spaced clumps of *Knautia macedonica* generate a lively rhythm. They are joined in the border by towering pheasant berry bush (*Leycesteria formosa*) and silvery *Brachyglottis greyi*. The picture is completed by a well-established *Hydrangea aspera*, a clump of *Euphorbia schillingii* and a sturdy *Salix magnifica*, which provides support for a vigorous golden hops vine (*Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus').

Turning the corner, inside borders are separated by another narrow gravel path. Bulk comes courtesy of large clumps of acanthus, persicaria, and large-leafed blue hostas while tall, wispy yellow verbascums and airy meadow rue (*Thalictrum* 'Elin') add vertical accents with the help of rusty foxgloves (*Digitalis ferruginea* 'Gigantea').

Her passion for purple resurfaces with the confident placement of *Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy' and *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood', accompanied by *Azara serrata* and bold plantings of *Scrophularia auriculata* 'Variegata' and *Melianthus major*.

Yellow is another common theme. Birgit loves *Cephalaria gigantea* (giant scabious), which produces primrose-yellow, pincushion-like flowers from March to April, and the North American perennial *Helianthus salicifolius* 'Low Down' (willowleaf sunflower). Before its bright yellow sunflowers appear in late summer, it sends up graceful willow-like foliage on long stems.

Another favourite is *Euphorbia schillingii*, a perennial with attractive dark green leaves with pale-green veining. It fourishes in well-drained soil in partial shade, and can grow to 90cm tall.

Birgit describes her achievement in the garden as her "contribution to the community". She says it brings joy to neighbours, "just as I envisioned it would". ☐

GET THE LOOK

Four items that Birgit Piskor thinks give her garden a definitive look.

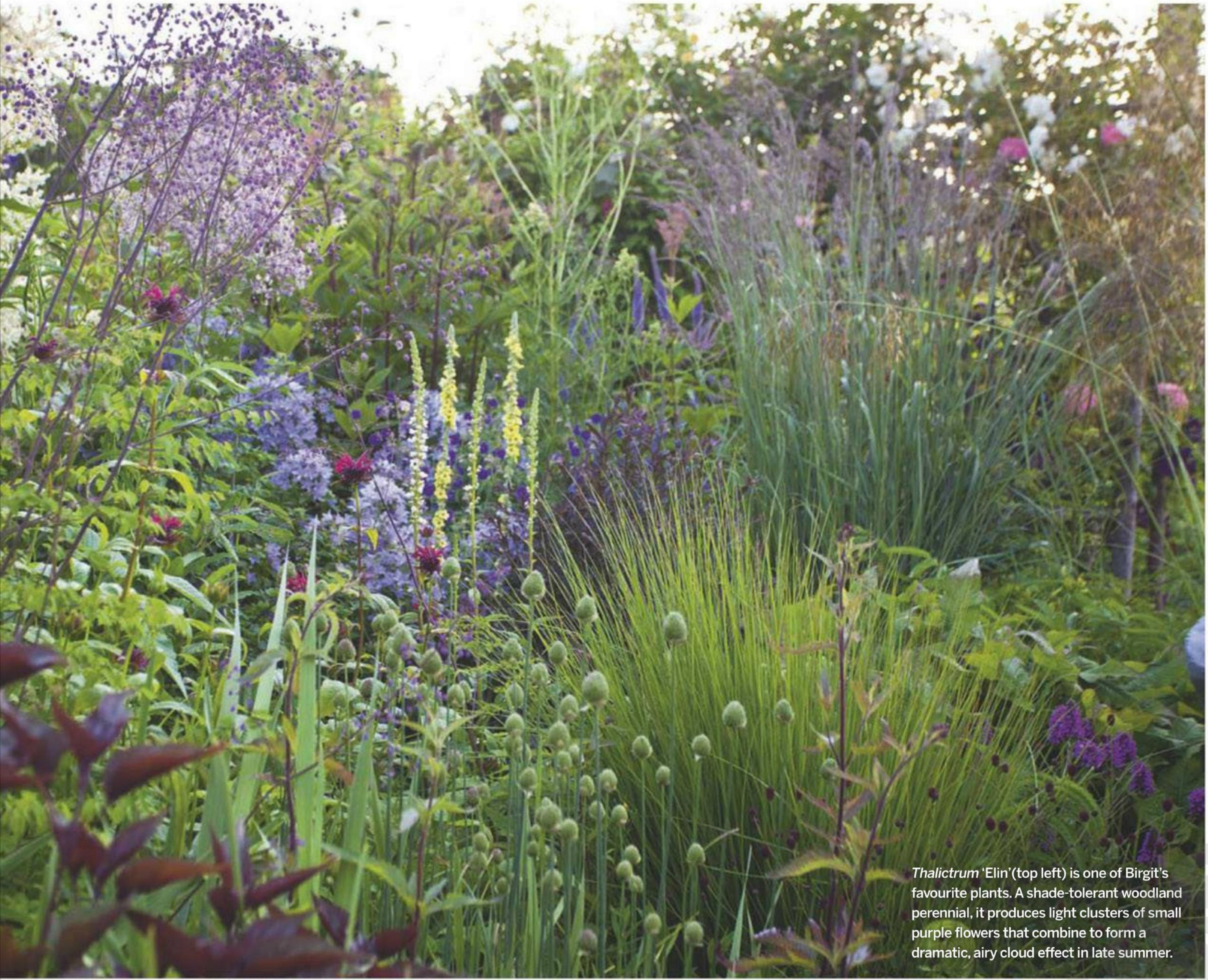
1 Rustic arbours (see left) Hand-built fencing, arbours and trellising, made out of stripped alder branches were time-consuming to design and make, but add an old-world charm and country-garden aesthetic.

2 Pebble mosaic (see left) Stones, carefully selected and grouped according to size and colour, are artistically embedded in a rectangle of concrete as a decorative accent on a narrow gravel path.

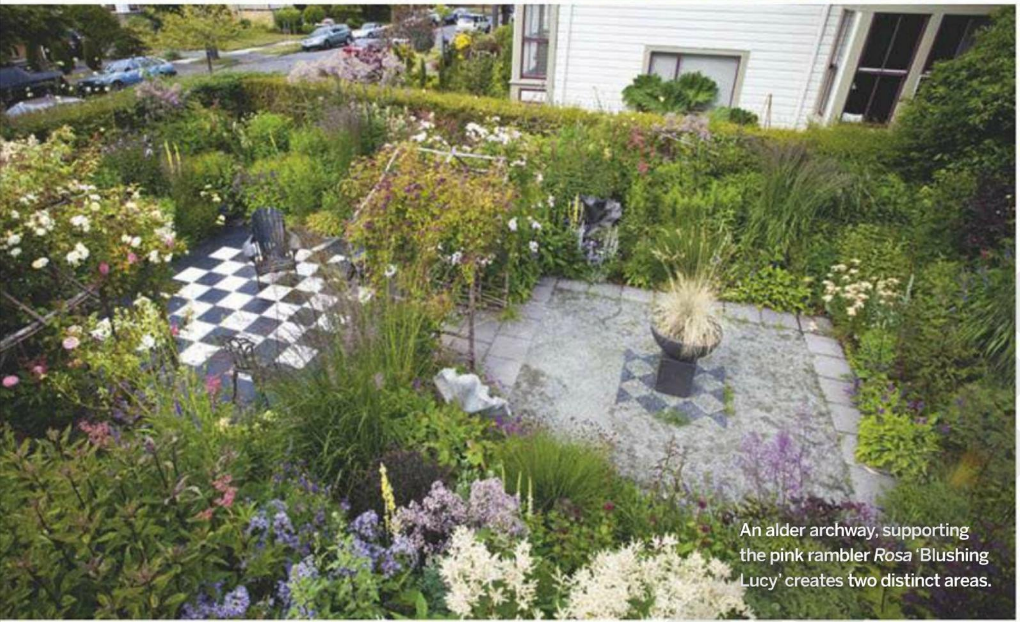
3 Individual sculptures Among her pieces Birgit's hand-made globe-shaped sculptural works (see first spread) have reptilian-like scales on the outside and are deliberately cracked like a boiled egg at the top to suggest emerging life.

4 Black Adirondack chairs (see opposite) These accentuate the dramatic impact of the black and white squares of the checkerboard (which dates from the 1930s when these were popular in Canada) and contrast with the natural earth-tones of the ornamental grasses.

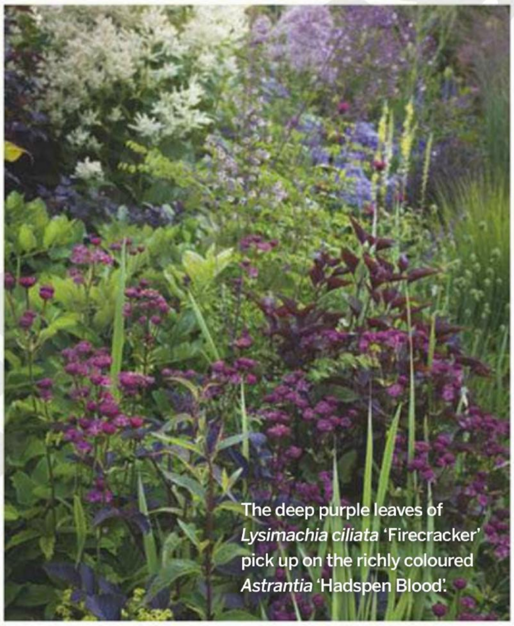
Amid tall, dense greens Birgit has added vibrant colour with orange *Achillea* 'Terracotta' and purple *Stachys officinalis* 'Hummelo'.



Thalictrum 'Elin'(top left) is one of Birgit's favourite plants. A shade-tolerant woodland perennial, it produces light clusters of small purple flowers that combine to form a dramatic, airy cloud effect in late summer.



An alder archway, supporting the pink rambler *Rosa* 'Blushing Lucy' creates two distinct areas.



The deep purple leaves of *Lysimachia ciliata* 'Firecracker' pick up on the richly coloured *Astrantia* 'Hadspen Blood'.

Refining the art of garden entertaining

A narrow townhouse garden has been restyled into a glorious space for outdoor entertaining by means of an elegant stone path and a subtle painterly palette

WORDS **ANNIE GATTI** PHOTOGRAPHS **JERRY HARPUR**

As if transforming the small garden of a Grade I listed townhouse from little more than a thoroughfare into a private and elegant entertaining space were not challenge enough, designer Andy Sturgeon had to accommodate two specific requests from the owner. First that the garden resemble, in terms of colour, a Vermeer painting, and second that it look as though it were a continuation of the Georgian house.

"I think everyone was expecting me to come up with something symmetrical and formal," says Andy. Instead what he came up with was a sinuous York stone path that snakes its way from french doors to a small mews house the owner uses as a library, creating three distinct parts to the garden and several surprisingly generous beds.

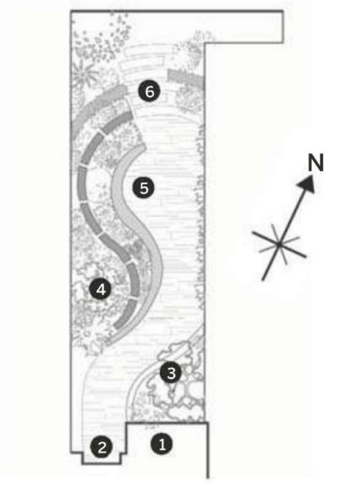
In a bold move Andy sited a *Cornus controversa* just a few paces from the french doors. "I wanted there to be greenery from the moment you stepped out," he explains. To the right, a raised bed under the canopy of a mature *Robinia pseudoacacia*, holds a collection of shade lovers, such as hellebores and Solomon's seal.

Clipped box balls and other evergreens such as *Nandina domestic,* with its bronze-edged young foliage, red-veined *Astelia nervosa* 'Westland' and *Libertia grandiflora*, repeated down the garden, provide planted structure. A 1.5m-high, S-shaped block wall, rendered white, and with Portland stone coping, encloses the central seating area and creates the garden's key structural elements. Beneath it a low serpentine wall in a Vermeer mustard shade, provides ample seating for party guests.

Smaller York stone setts and two yew hedges edge the tranquil green planting of the mews end. During the day, the mews house is partly obscured by the white flowers and autumn burnt orange leaves of an *Amelanchier* 'Robin Hill', while at night it can be lit up to provide a dramatic backdrop to the garden entertaining. □

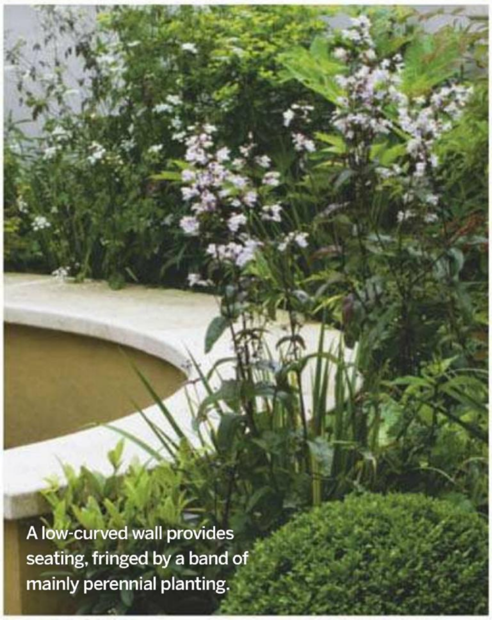
KEY ELEMENTS

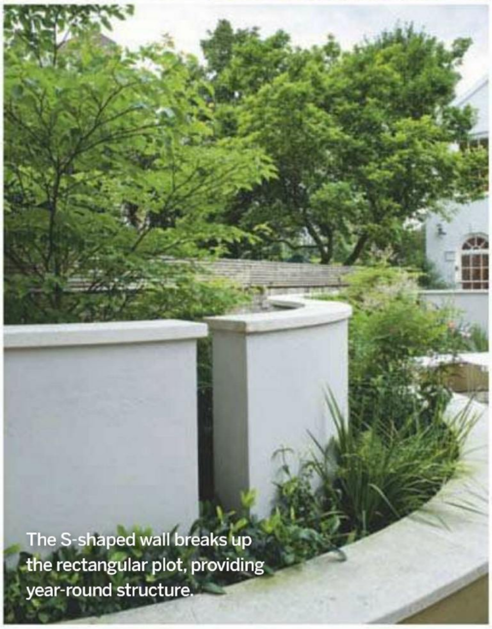
WHAT Garden of listed townhouse.
WHERE Chelsea, London.
SIZE 20m x 5.8m.
SOIL London clay, improved with organic matter and screened loam for raised beds.
CONDITIONS Sun in middle of garden, rest shade or semi-shade.
SPECIAL FEATURES Sculptural 1.5m-high S-shaped wall with lower wall for sitting.
DESIGNED BY Andy Sturgeon
www.andysturgeon.com.



1 House
2 French doors
3 Raised beds
4 Planting area
5 Seating area
6 York stone setts

At the mews end, bands of *Soleirolia soleirolii* create the illusion of greater width.


A low-curved wall provides seating, fringed by a band of mainly perennial planting.


The S-shaped wall breaks up the rectangular plot, providing year-round structure.

DESIGNER'S TIPS FOR SMALL GARDEN DESIGN

1 Don't be tempted to cram too many things into a small space or it will feel crowded and cluttered. Keep it simple with just a few bold structures and ornaments.

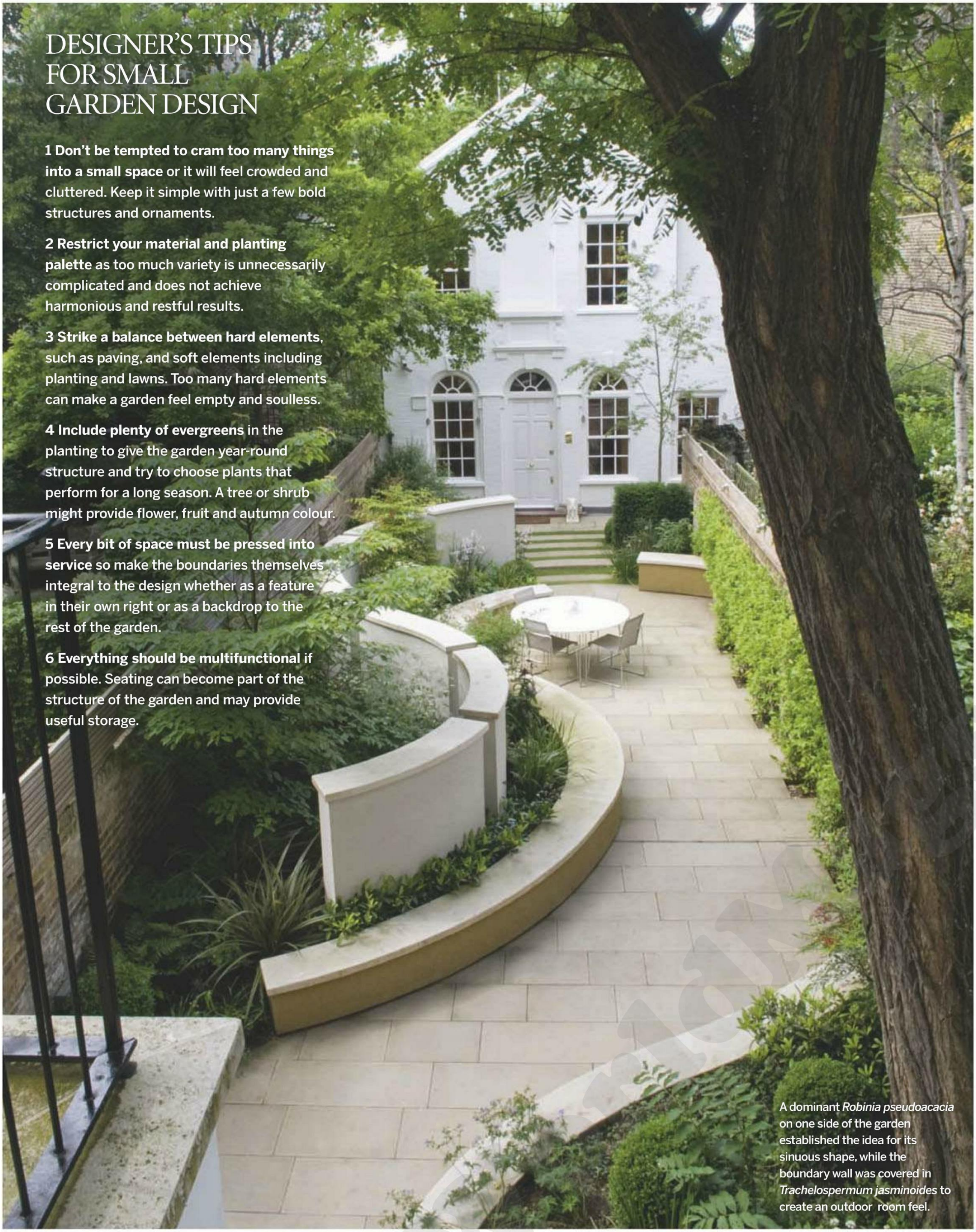
2 Restrict your material and planting palette as too much variety is unnecessarily complicated and does not achieve harmonious and restful results.

3 Strike a balance between hard elements, such as paving, and soft elements including planting and lawns. Too many hard elements can make a garden feel empty and soulless.

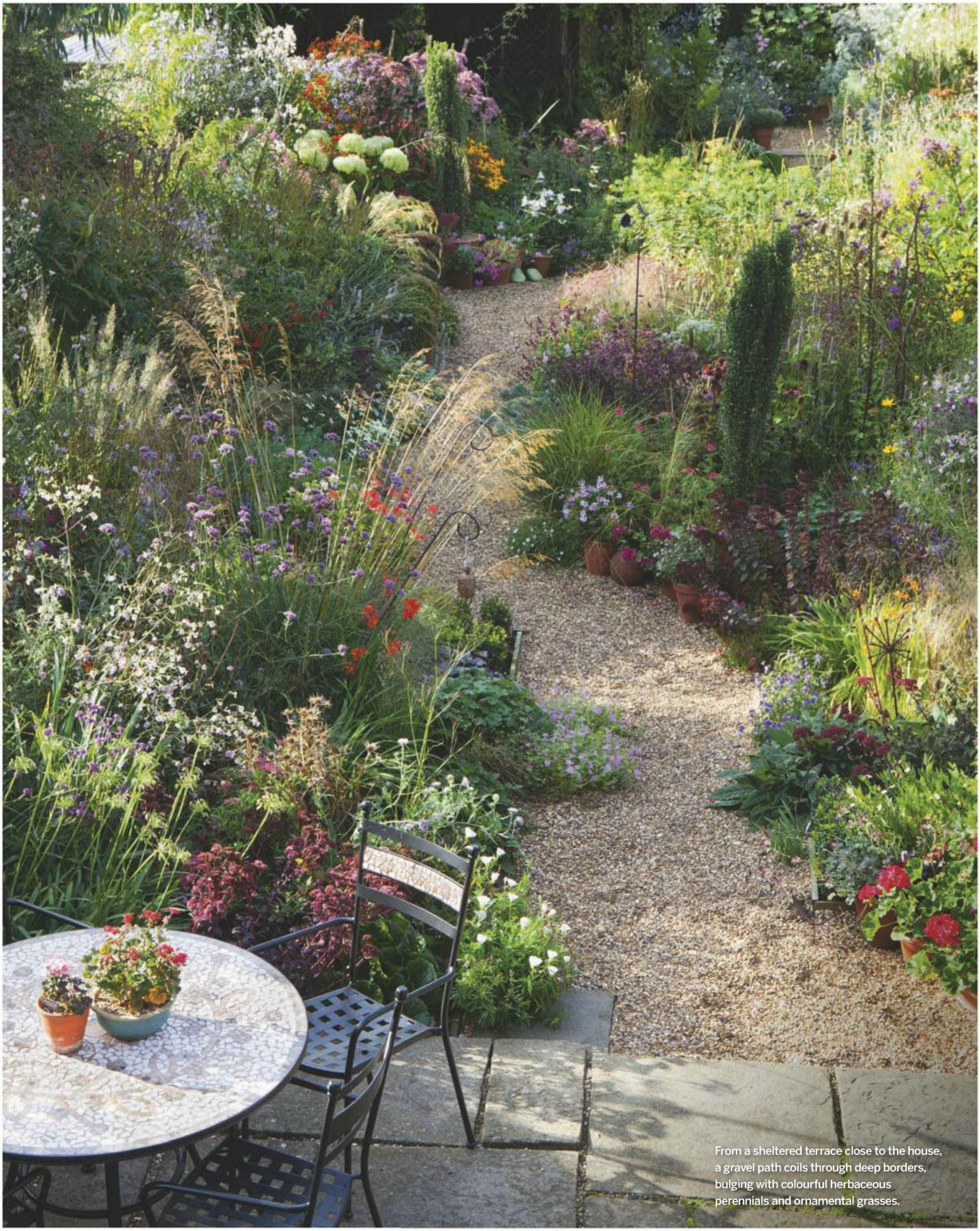
4 Include plenty of evergreens in the planting to give the garden year-round structure and try to choose plants that perform for a long season. A tree or shrub might provide flower, fruit and autumn colour.

5 Every bit of space must be pressed into service so make the boundaries themselves integral to the design whether as a feature in their own right or as a backdrop to the rest of the garden.

6 Everything should be multifunctional if possible. Seating can become part of the structure of the garden and may provide useful storage.



A dominant *Robinia pseudoacacia* on one side of the garden established the idea for its sinuous shape, while the boundary wall was covered in *Trachelospermum jasminoides* to create an outdoor room feel.

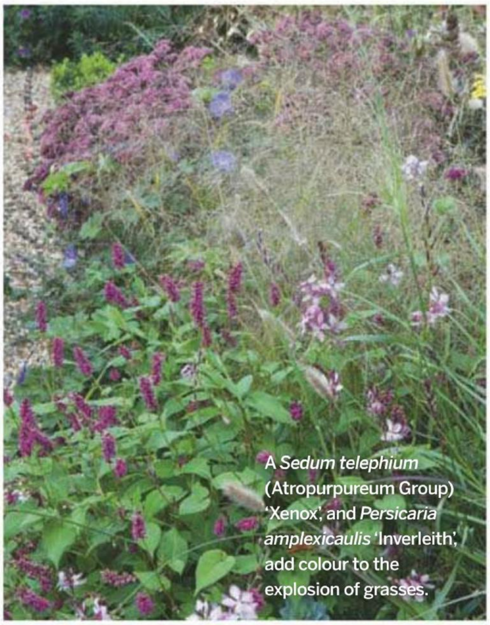


From a sheltered terrace close to the house, a gravel path coils through deep borders, bulging with colourful herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses.

Path to a new beginning

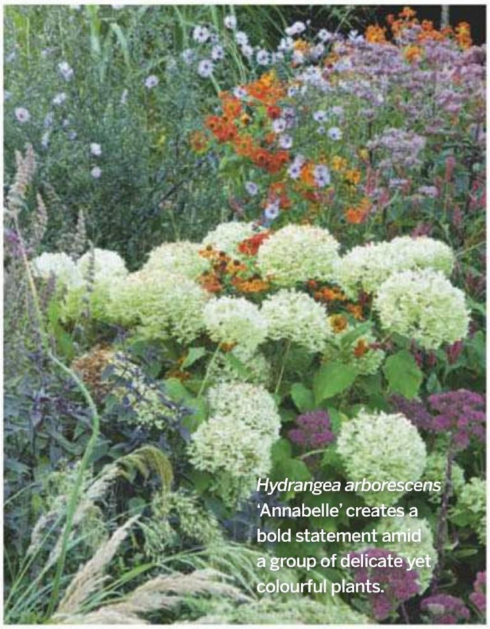
Annie Godfrey's small suburban lawn with borders was dull and uninspiring until the drought of 2006 spurred her to embark on a radical rethink

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**



A *Sedum telephium* (Atropurpureum Group) 'Xenox', and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Inverleith', add colour to the explosion of grasses.

Annie enjoys relaxing in her perfect late summer garden with her Jack Russell terrier, Myrtle.



Hydrangea arborescens 'Annabelle' creates a bold statement amid a group of delicate yet colourful plants.

Searching for Annie Godfrey's house you know when you have found the right place because the tiny front garden is packed with so many interesting and usual plants. But, this is merely a taster for what awaits you behind the house.

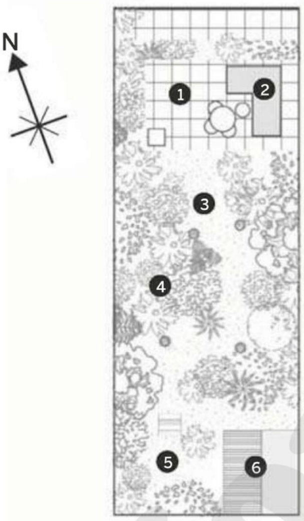
Annie, a nurserywoman and gardener, has transformed her suburban back garden into a riot of colour, teeming with plants. For years she tinkered with what she describes as "a typical suburban garden: large lawn surrounded by narrow borders", which became easy to neglect. When the drought of 2006 added to its sorry state Annie decided to redesign and replant it.

Close to the house Annie has laid a terrace around a raised pool. During the summer the area is filled with pots of tender perennials and succulents that bask in the south-facing aspect.

Where once there was a lawn, a gravel path, with plants tumbling on to it from the teeming borders, now winds its way along the garden's length. The planting, mainly perennials and grasses, is profuse and exuberant. Large-leaved plants, such as a pollarded *Paulownia* and *Dahlia imperialis*, provide a bold background to delicate flowers, while spires of evergreen *Ilex crenata* create a regular pulse throughout.

Her experience in the nursery means she was able to select the perfect cultivars for her design. *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent', for example,

▷



Key elements

WHAT Garden of semi-detached suburban house, with plants largely from owner's nursery (www.daisyroots.com).

WHERE North Hertfordshire.

SIZE 30m x 8.5m.

SOIL Free-draining, retentive neutral loam.

CONDITIONS Sheltered, south-facing.

SPECIAL FEATURES Plant-filled, exuberant planting scheme; borrowed views; sunken secret garden.

1 Terrace
2 Raised pool
3 Gravel path
4 Planted border
5 Sunken garden
6 Shed

WorldMags

By repeating flower shape and colour around the garden Annie adds rhythm and a feeling of space to the borders.

A distant church spire adds a sense of depth to the garden, while plantings of tall, airy plants, such as *Stipa gigantea*, pink-flowered *Nicotiana mutabilis* and *Verbena bonariensis* accentuate a sense of endless planting.

▷ is much taller and more delicate than other cultivars and conveys well the airiness that Annie wanted to achieve in the borders. The flowers of *Hemerocallis* 'American Revolution' have just the depth of velvety darkness Annie was looking for. In fact her broad knowledge of plants permeates the garden.

At the end of the garden, where Annie and her partner Steve Machin can sit and relax, is a sunken, secret garden. Annie and Steve did the hard work of digging out the soil and building low retaining walls in soft oak. Here Annie favours plants with pastel-coloured flowers and fragrant foliage. Pots of herbs and scented-leaved pelargonium add to the perfume.

Like many gardens that use lots of perennials and grasses, it is at its best in late summer. Annie is now working to extend the season by planting spring-flowering bulbs and woodland perennials under the later-flowering plants. With all the hard work to do in her gardening business and a nursery to run, surely she must be too tired at the end of a day to work on her own garden? "Not at all," she says. "This garden is food for my soul; it's never a chore, never hard work. I love this garden again."□

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS 8 Gosselin Road, Benego,
Hertford SG14 3LG

OPEN Open as part of the NGS (www.ngs.org.uk) on 29 August and 30 September

ANNIE'S TIPS FOR SMALL SPACES

Take some advice from Annie to enhance your own small suburban plot

1 Make use of borrowed landscape. Neighbouring trees, for example, can be incorporated into the background of your garden.

2 Make paths as wide as possible to allow for plants growing over them. Narrow, pinched paths will make the garden feel small. The same goes for borders.

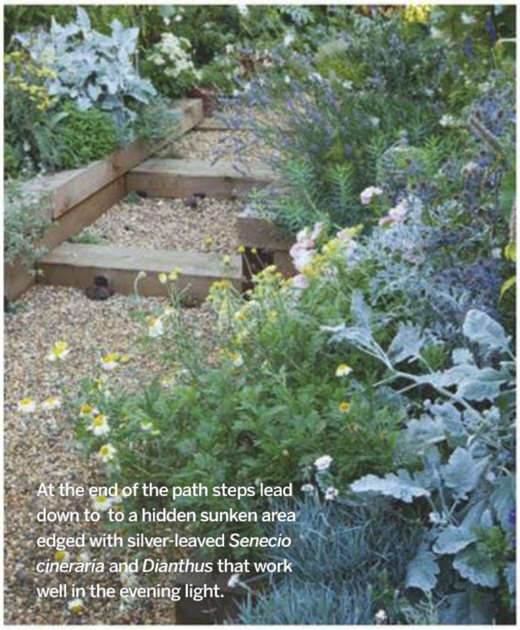
3 Don't be afraid to use large, architectural plants in small gardens – they add drama.

4 Make the most of fences, walls and sheds for climbing plants. As well as making the most of the space you have, they will help blur the edges of the garden.

5 Keep on top of the weeding and dead-heading. Weeds and faded flowers catch the eye far more in smaller gardens than large ones.

6 Mulch in the spring to lock in moisture and cut down on time spent weeding. Annie uses mushroom compost, which is low in nutrients but improves soil structure.

7 Stain perimeter fences a dark uniform colour. Dark fences appear to recede.



At the end of the path steps lead down to to a hidden sunken area edged with silver-leaved *Senecio cineraria* and *Dianthus* that work well in the evening light.

Annie grows a variety of plants and herbs in pots, moving them around to change how the garden looks and feels.

Zambesi Allium sculptures by Big Black House Design (www.bigblackhousedesign.co.uk) mirror the tall, burgundy *Sedum* 'José Aubergine' to their left.

Discovering a taste for the good life

In this stylish design by Ann-Marie Powell, an awkward space has become a bountiful garden where the shed is a feast for the eyes and plants are the ingredients for the evening meal

WORDS ANNE DE VERTEUIL PHOTOGRAPHS RACHEL WARNE
IMAGES TAKEN FROM THE BOOK *PLANS FOR SMALL GARDENS* BY ANN-MARIE POWELL

How do you turn an oddly shaped, heavily overlooked site into a productive kitchen garden that doubles as a relaxing outdoor living space?

This was the challenge for garden designer Ann-Marie Powell when she was asked to create a small London garden for professional chef and cookery writer, Lucy Cufflin and her partner Ian Colby. The brief was to create a distinctive design that included interesting materials, provided space to sit and eat outside, and enabled Lucy to experiment with growing a wide range of herbs and vegetables.

However, some constraining factors had to be accommodated: the garden's angular, tilted L-shape and its very urban situation abutting the over-ground District Line. Yet, says Ann-Marie, it is apparent negatives like these that often prove the stimulus for creating something exciting and out of the ordinary.

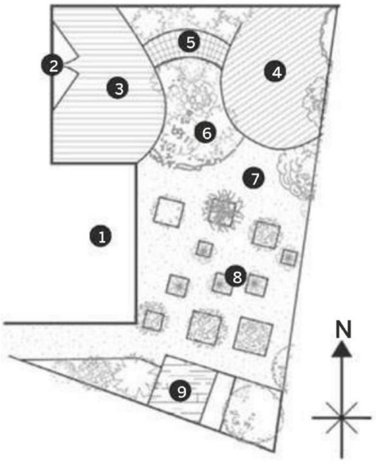
The awkward shape turned out to have a positive spin, offering an opportunity to create a garden of two parts, with sitting and dining areas extending from the house, while the triangular space created by the other two boundaries became the vegetable and working end.

Hardwood decking was chosen for the seating and eating areas, and the two decks are separated by a big central bed, in which flowering perennials mingle with edibles. A curved path of granite setts links the decks, whose outer edges have been cut to form curves. This allows the plants to wrap round and semi-enclose these intimate sitting spaces.

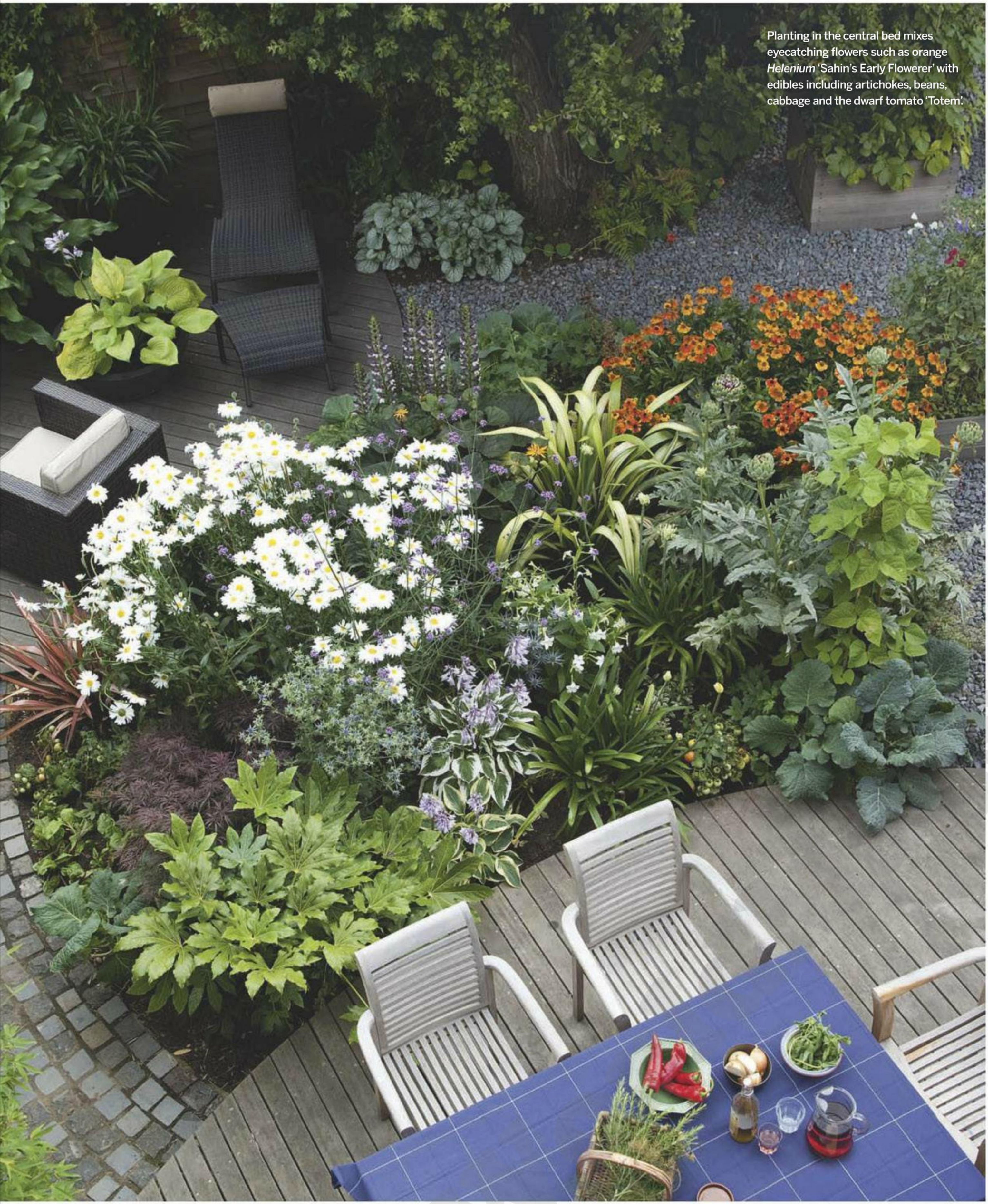
By contrast, the kitchen garden is all geometry, a dynamic arrangement of ▷

KEY ELEMENTS

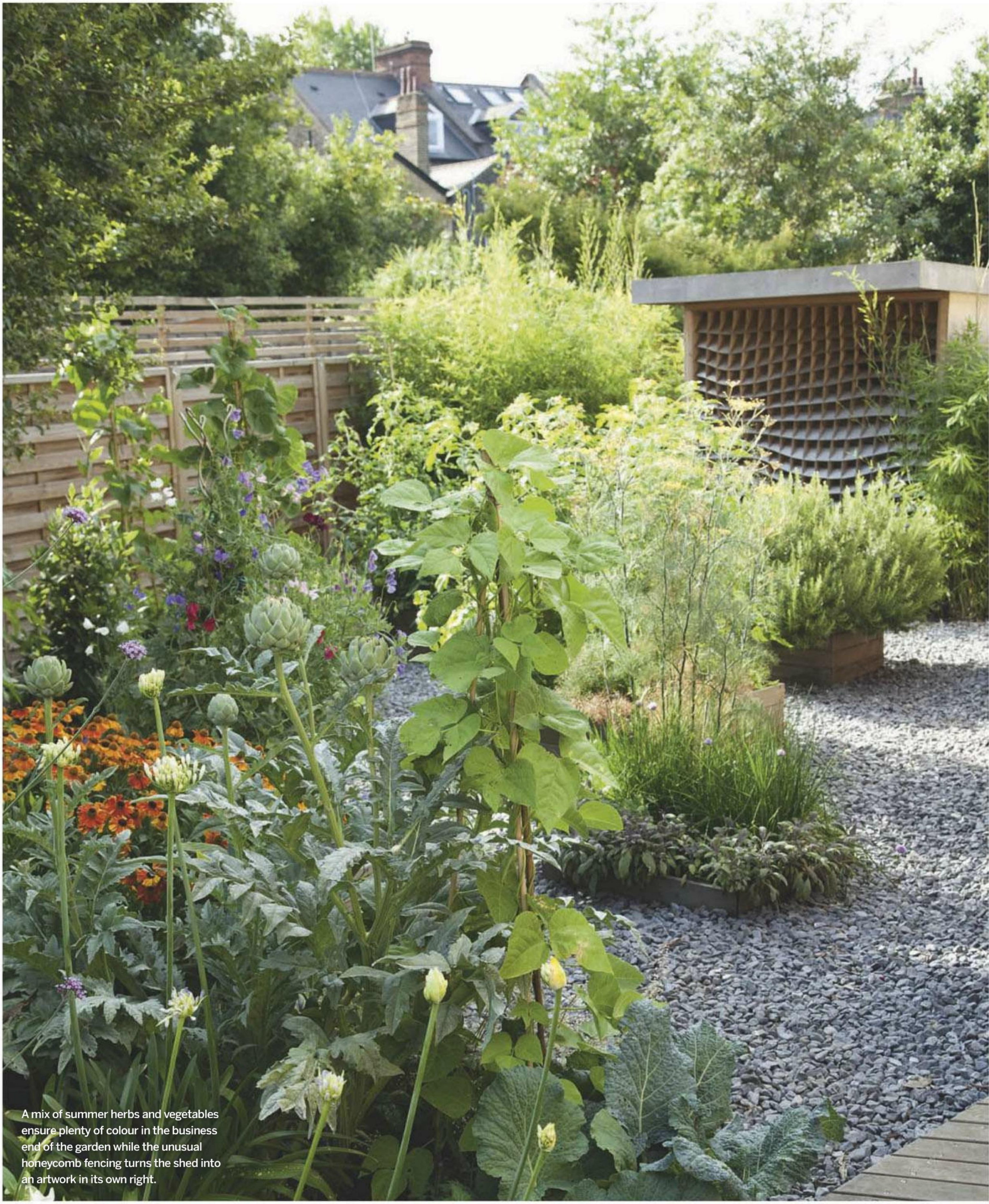
WHAT Urban garden with edibles.
WHERE West London.
SIZE 18m x 10.8m.
SOIL New topsoil imported to replace dust and rubble
SPECIAL FEATURES L-shaped outdoor room and kitchen garden.
DESIGNED BY Ann-Marie Powell.
www.ann-mariepowell.com



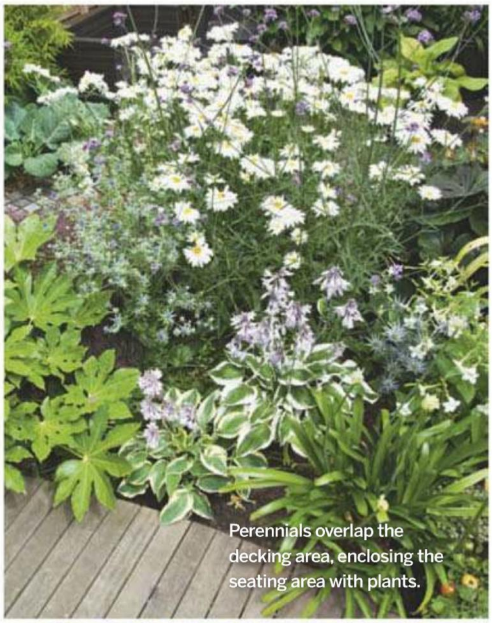
1 House
2 French doors
3 & 4 Decking areas
5 Stone sett path
6 Central flowerbed
7 Gravelled area
8 Moveable planters
9 Honeycomb shed



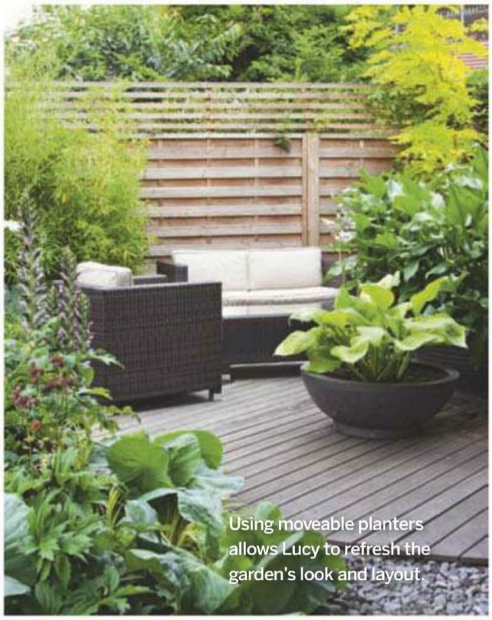
Planting in the central bed mixes eyecatching flowers such as orange *Helenium* 'Sahin's Early Flowerer' with edibles including artichokes, beans, cabbage and the dwarf tomato 'Totem'.



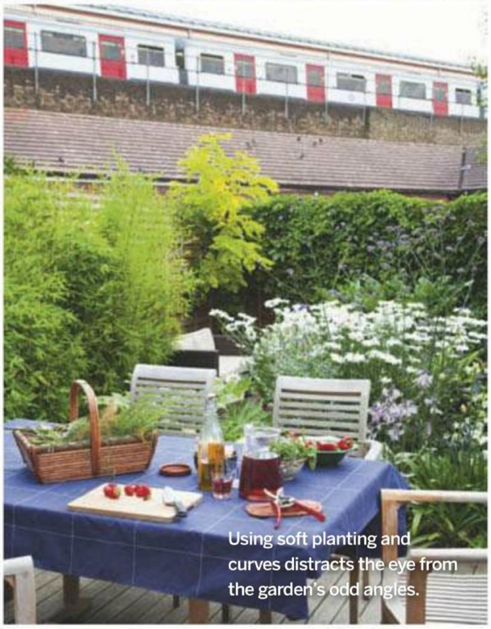
A mix of summer herbs and vegetables ensure plenty of colour in the business end of the garden while the unusual honeycomb fencing turns the shed into an artwork in its own right.



Perennials overlap the decking area, enclosing the seating area with plants.



Using moveable planters allows Lucy to refresh the garden's look and layout.



Using soft planting and curves distracts the eye from the garden's odd angles.

> *"The awkward shape turned out to have a positive spin, offering an opportunity to create a garden of two parts"*

▷ square planters of assorted sizes, each packed with a mix of vegetables, herbs, fruit and salads, from potatoes, spinach and rosemary to blueberries, rhubarb and chillies. In between are single beds of fragrant sweet peas for cutting, and climbing French beans. For Lucy it's about growing things for a season and then moving on to the next, and this gives her inspiration for new recipes. "She's brilliant with gluts," says Ann-Marie.

The garden's back boundary runs at an angle to the house and, to distract from this, vegetable beds have been laid out on the diagonal, breaking up the space in an interesting way and making the garden seem deeper than it actually is.

The containers are made of the same hardwood as the decking and can be moved around to vary the scene. The stone chippings around the beds create a practical surface, heavy enough to stay in place, but smart and in keeping with the greys and blacks chosen for the garden furniture.

Any working garden that requires annual sowing, potting on and harvesting needs space for tools and for raising young plants, so a shed was essential but it had to pass muster in terms of garden aesthetics.

The ingenious solution was honeycomb panels, a form of custom-made, trellis-like fencing that is part sculptural feature, part practical space divider. The resulting potting shed is a wonderful standalone feature, faced with a panel of honeycomb fencing and given added prominence with a hardwood deck surround.

Now in its sixth year, the garden is much loved and used by its sociable owners. Sitting here in the evening enjoying delicious food fresh from the garden, it's easy to forget you are in a small overlooked space. No doubt District Line commuters also enjoy their passing glimpse of summer in the city. □

READER OFFER

Read more about this garden in *Plans for Small Gardens* by Ann-Marie Powell (Pavilion, £20). GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers can buy the book for £18. For details turn to page 111, or visit the book shop on www.gardensillustrated.com

DESIGNER'S TIPS FOR SMALL SPACES

Create your own small-scale vegetable garden by following Ann-Marie's recipe for success

1 Draw a scale plan. Make sure you include all the essential and existing features as this will help determine which elements you can and can't fit in.

2 Keep it simple. Stick to one overall style, and choose complementary materials and plants.

3 Be flexible. Allow space, however tiny, for seating in different parts of the garden so you can catch sun or shade and take in different views.

4 A place to store tools and equipment is invaluable. If you can't conceal it, turn it into a feature and give it a distinctive edge.

5 Consider commissioning bespoke items. These can help make the most of small spaces, but be clear about what you expect, and make sure everything is agreed in writing.

6 Be selective. If space is tight, choose less readily available or expensive vegetable varieties.

7 Vegetable and cutting beds will be changing throughout the season, so make sure the background planting is strong and coherent.

8 Choose plants that offer more than one feature. Architectural foliage, a long flowering habit, autumn colour or a good winter shape will create visual variety throughout the year.

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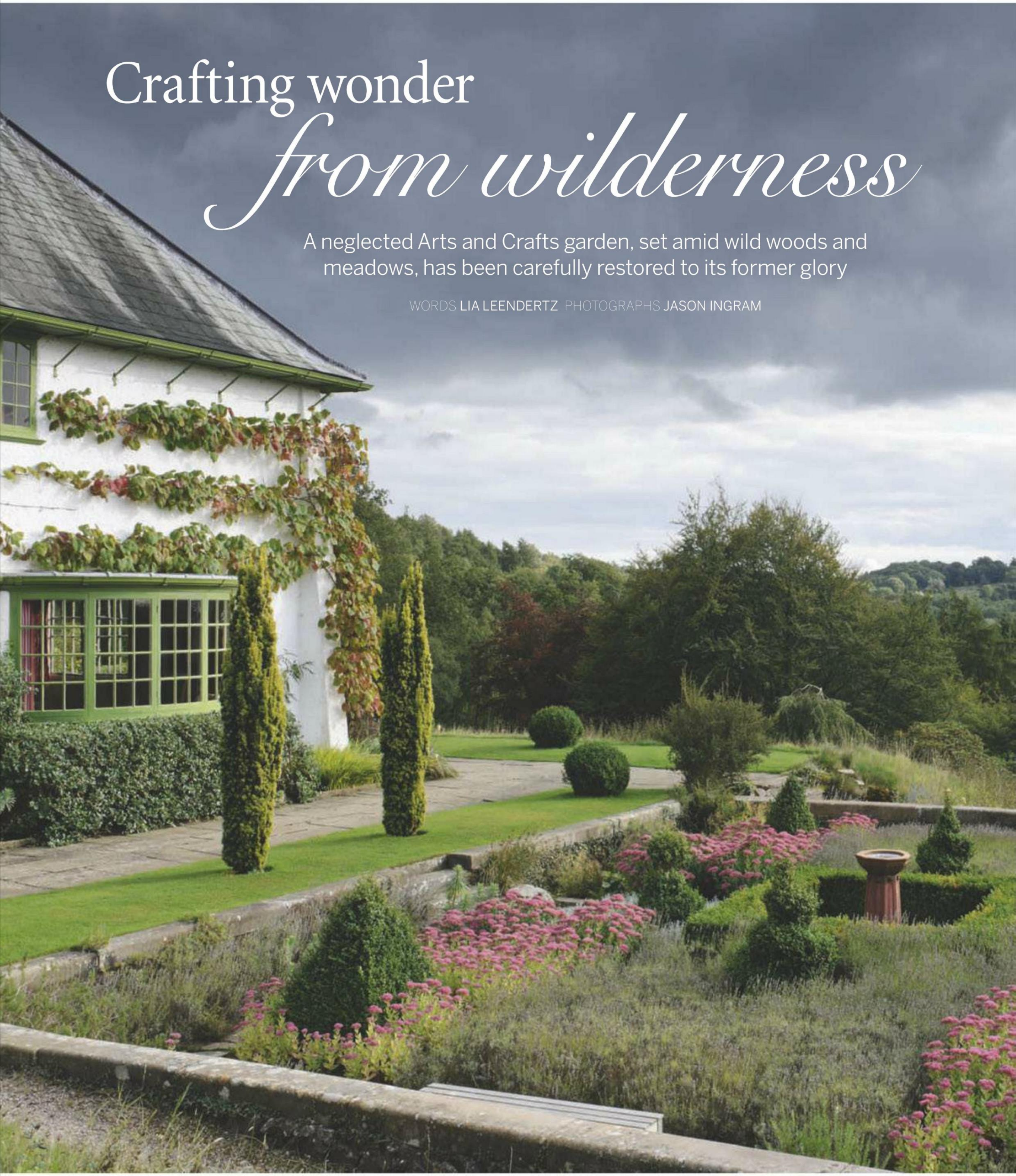
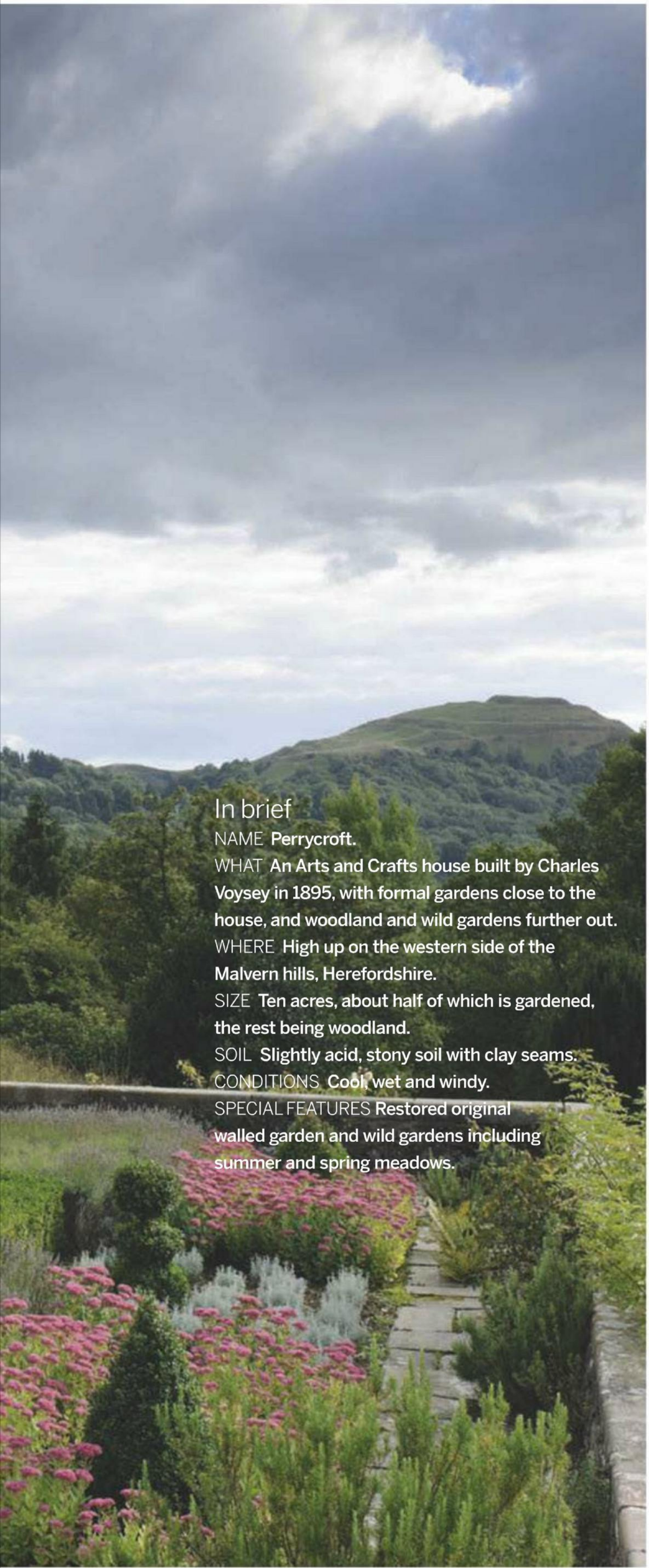
Crafting wonder *from wilderness*

A neglected Arts and Crafts garden, set amid wild woods and meadows, has been carefully restored to its former glory

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**





In brief

NAME **Perrycroft.**

WHAT **An Arts and Crafts house built by Charles Voysey in 1895, with formal gardens close to the house, and woodland and wild gardens further out.**

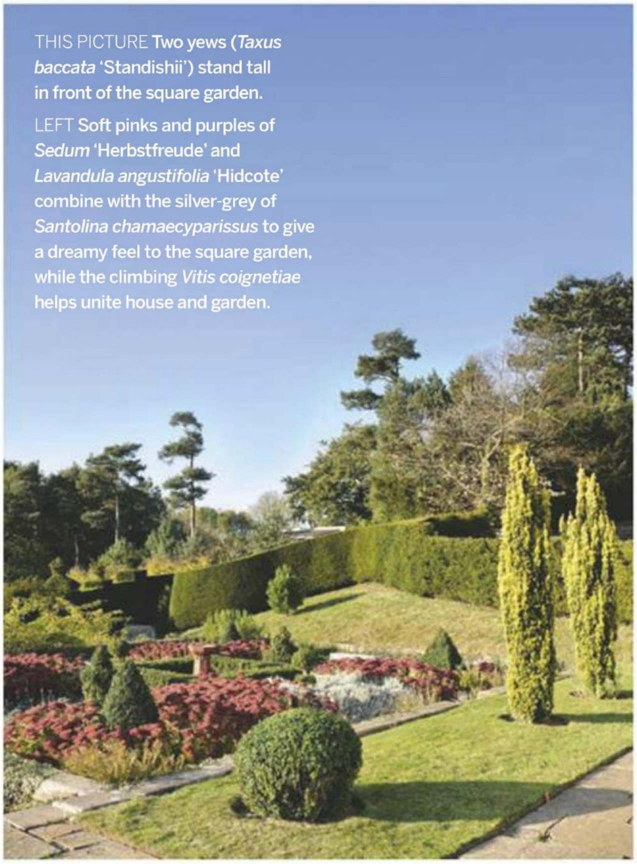
WHERE **High up on the western side of the Malvern hills, Herefordshire.**

SIZE **Ten acres, about half of which is gardened, the rest being woodland.**

SOIL **Slightly acid, stony soil with clay seams.**

CONDITIONS **Cool, wet and windy.**

SPECIAL FEATURES **Restored original walled garden and wild gardens including summer and spring meadows.**



THIS PICTURE **Two yews (*Taxus baccata* 'Standishii') stand tall in front of the square garden.**

LEFT **Soft pinks and purples of *Sedum* 'Herbstfreude' and *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote' combine with the silver-grey of *Santolina chamaecyparissus* to give a dreamy feel to the square garden, while the climbing *Vitis coignetiae* helps unite house and garden.**

When garden furniture designer Gillian Archer couldn't find any benches that would suit her garden, she designed her own. Tall-backed, quirkily proportioned and craftsman-made of English oak, they sit handsomely, surveying miles of uninterrupted views across undulating Herefordshire countryside. It was a fitting move in a garden defined in part by the ethos of the house at its centre. Perrycroft was the first major commission of architect Charles Voysey (1857-1941), one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement, a movement that celebrated attention to detail and acclaimed the craftsman over the machine.

"In Arts and Crafts' architecture the little things are as important as the whole," says Gillian, and she points out the iron ventilation grilles inside the dining room – hand-worked silhouettes of naïvely painted birds and trees – and the beautifully ornate iron drain pipes outside. The house is large and low, and chock full of quirks, nooks and crannies: a circular window here, a tower there, all demonstrating a playfulness with proportion that gives the house what Gillian calls an *Alice-in-Wonderland* quality. It is strongly reminiscent of a less hyperactive Portmeirion – very much a contemporary – the Welsh village designed by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in an Italianate style. This impression is strengthened by the mophead hydrangeas surrounding the courtyard next to the house. "They were an in-plant of the period," says Gillian, although Perrycroft's alkaline soil dictates hers are pink rather than Portmeirion's blue.

Gillian and her husband Mark bought the house 12 years ago from the Boys' Brigade, which had used the house, and the grounds, as its headquarters. "They had cut the grass but that was about it. Seedlings had grown into fully grown ash trees, there were thickets ▷

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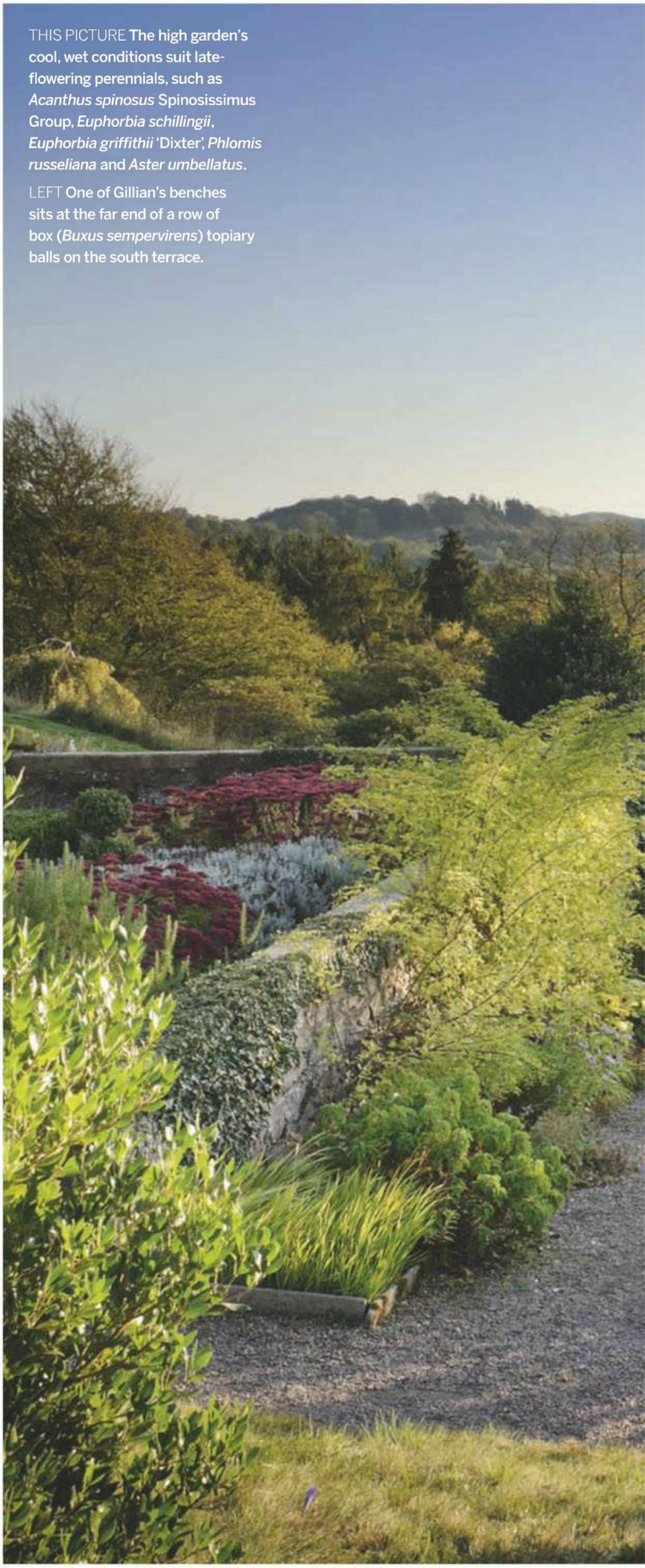


THIS PICTURE **The high garden's cool, wet conditions suit late-flowering perennials, such as *Acanthus spinosus* Spinosissimus Group, *Euphorbia schillingii*, *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Dixter', *Phlomis russeliana* and *Aster umbellatus*.**

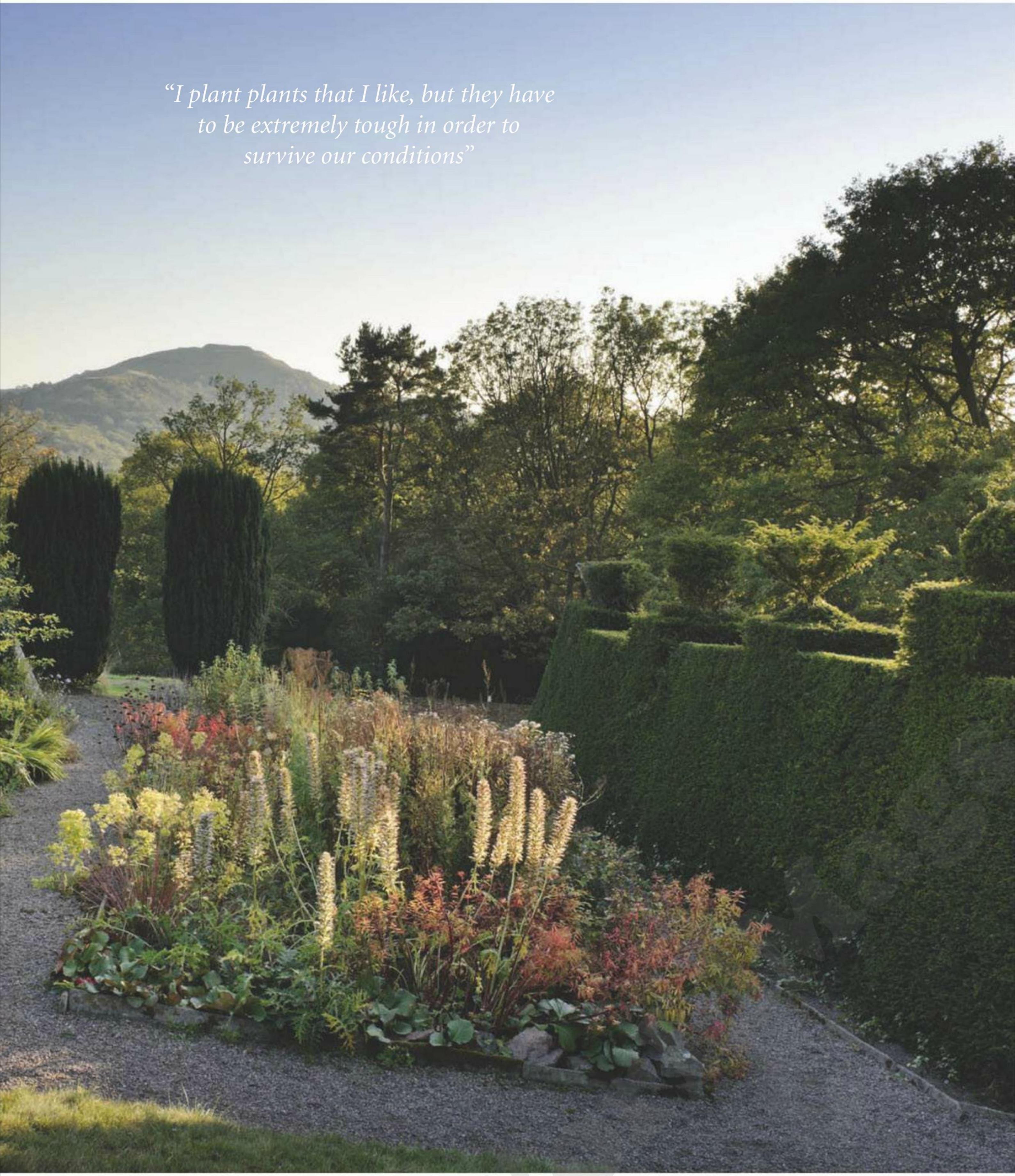
LEFT **One of Gillian's benches sits at the far end of a row of box (*Buxus sempervirens*) topiary balls on the south terrace.**

▷ of brambles, all of the features that you would associate with neglected land." Slowly the couple set about restoring both the house and its gardens. This was clearing and hacking work, and included cutting back overgrown yew hedges that had turned into large trees. These are now fully tamed, huge and beautiful buttressed hedges, giving no hint of their previous tree-like lives.

Faithful to tradition

Arts and Craft-style gardens typically nestle about the house; the house is not set proudly apart beyond an expanse of lawn but is fully integrated into its surroundings. Gillian has kept to this tradition, with climbers such as *Vitis coignetiae* clambering the walls, and shrubs rubbing up alongside, enveloping the house. But the area that most closely chimes with the house is the walled garden. Here, plans existed and the original footprint was still intact. It is a formal area of parterres and box topiary, with a beautifully built original summer house and original walls and gates. Gillian has remained fairly faithful to the layout (she simplified one area made impractical through too many paths and too narrow borders), but she was left no evidence at all of the original planting.

It was a great excuse to give herself an entirely free hand when it came to the plants, leaving the mophead hydrangeas and box and yew topiary as her only nod to plant fashions of the era. "I plant plants that I like, but above all they have to be easy to grow and extremely tough in order to survive our conditions." The garden is high up on the western side of the Malvern Hills. "It is always a degree colder than in the valley, and wetter and windier too." So she leans ▷



"I plant plants that I like, but they have to be extremely tough in order to survive our conditions"

"The area that most closely chimes with the house is the walled garden"

THIS PICTURE **The burgundy red of *Dahlia* 'Arabian Night' adds a bold contrast to the more subtle hues of *Aster novae-angliae* 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke', *Aster* 'Little Carlow' and *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks'.**

RIGHT **In the walled garden, Gillian has maintained the unusual topiary of the original Arts and Crafts garden that give the house its *Alice-in-Wonderland* feel.**

▷ towards late-flowering herbaceous plants – rudbeckias, grasses, sedums and asters, which she finds are among the toughest here.

Beyond the formal garden and sloping away from the house are extensive wild gardens, which Gillian and her full-time gardener Angus Smith have nurtured into being through careful, thoughtful management. "We have brought nothing in, and planted nothing. All of this has come from mowing at the right time and making the conditions right for those plants that were already naturally in the soil." In spring, native lent lilies (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) spread generously across a path and up the hillside, while wild flowers, such as rough hawkbit, betony and oxeye daisy, fill the meadow that drops away from the house with colour in high summer. At the base of the slope is a large pond, again filled with nothing but plants that have alighted there naturally and all managed by editing rather than planting. Here Gillian has designed a walkway that echoes the lines of her benches and floats garden visitors out across the water, stamping her own careful craftsmanship on its furthest, wildest reaches. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Perrycroft, Jubilee Drive, Upper Colwall, Malvern, Herefordshire WR13 6DN.

TEL 07858 393767.

WEBSITE www.gillianarcherdesign.co.uk

OPEN 30 September (2pm-5pm) for the NGS, www.ngs.org.uk

See overleaf for Gillian's plant choices and other Arts and Crafts gardens to visit ▷

WorldMags

9 of Gillian's favourite plants for late summer

1 ***Centaurea nigra*** **(knapweed)**
"One of the plants in the summer meadow, it floats right up to the box balls near the house. I love the contrast of the purply brown seed heads against the bright green of the grass alongside."

2 ***Echinacea purpurea*** **'White Lustre'**
"The pure white petals droop sadly around the prominent cone. The flowers look like they might float away."

3 ***Phlomis russeliana***
"Statuesque and sculptural, phlomis has a rough, hairy leaf and yellow whorls of flowers, and looks good in all seasons. I plant it near *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Dixter', which always has a touch of orange but turns brilliant in autumn."

4 ***Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii***
"Such a vibrant yellow, but not at all brassy, and beautiful against the black centre. The stems are so slender and elegant. This flower stands up to close examination at the front of a border."

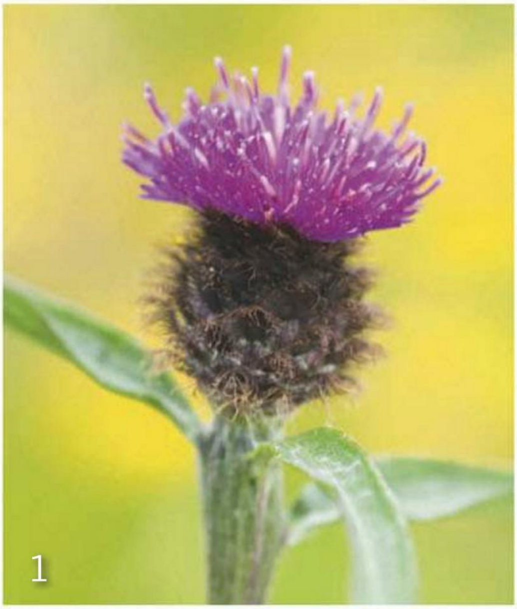
5 ***Aster*** **'Little Carlow'**
"It is nice to have autumn warmth but this is a cooler shade and the sort of colour you would expect to see in spring. It is good against warm autumnal colours."

6 ***Hydrangea aspera*** **(Villosa Group)**
"Grown in the woodland garden, this plant has a beautiful, pointed leaf and wine-coloured flowers. Stalks have a flush of wine too, so it rewards close examination."

7 ***Hydrangea paniculata***
"The flower of this hydrangea opens white and turns pale pink. It's a very graceful bush with an open habit."

8 ***Sedum*** **'Herbstfreude'**
"This plant never looks less than beautiful. Juicy pink green flower buds gradually open to brilliant pink then fade to a lovely fox colour. I like the undulating, textured surface a group of them forms."

9 ***Abelia* x *grandiflora***
"I like plants that come into their own in autumn, and abelia does. The combination of red-tinged foliage and pink flowers is unusual and subtle."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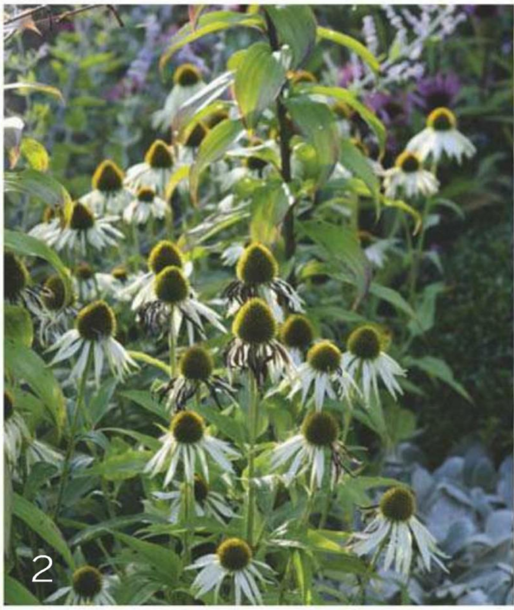
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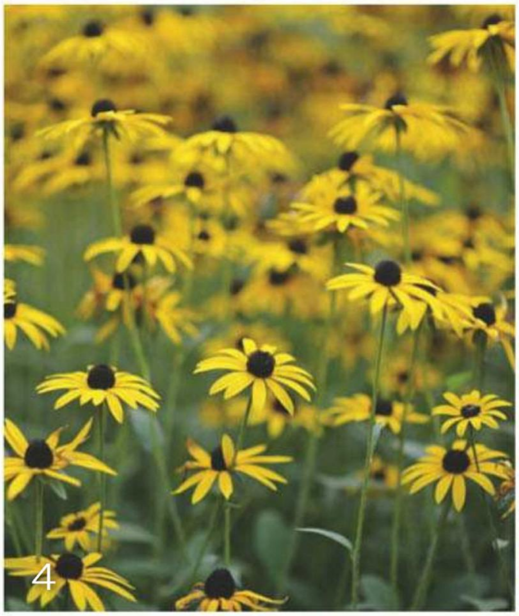
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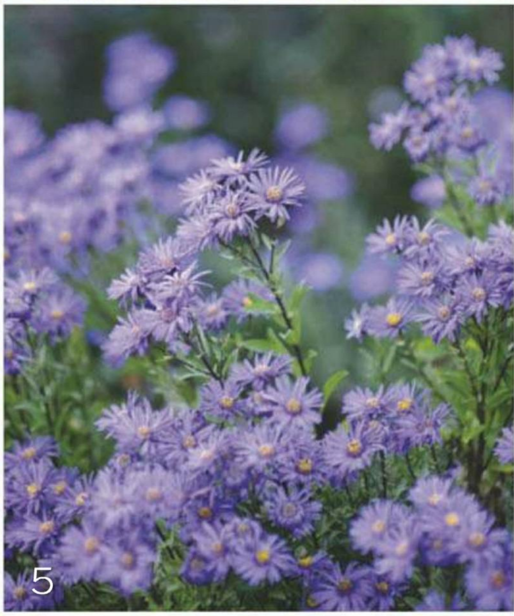
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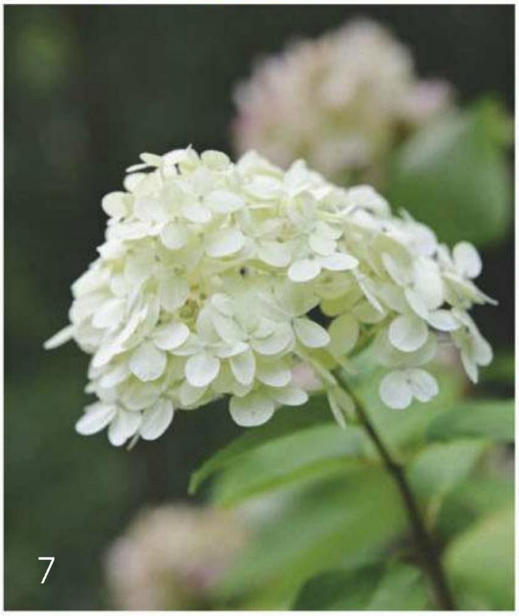
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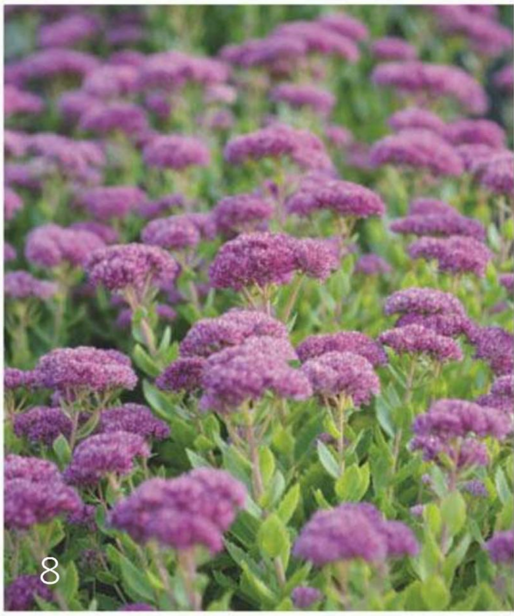
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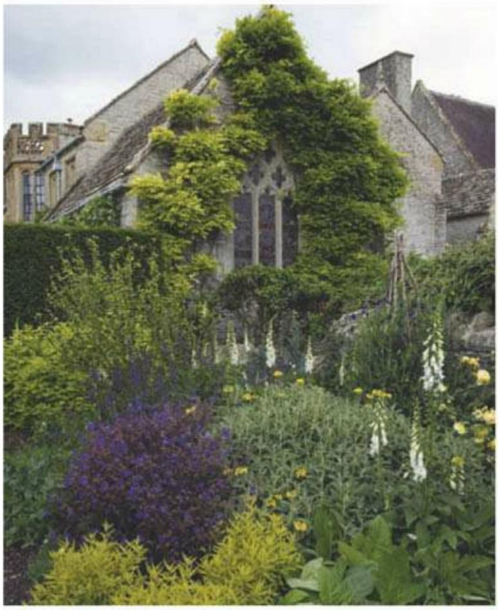
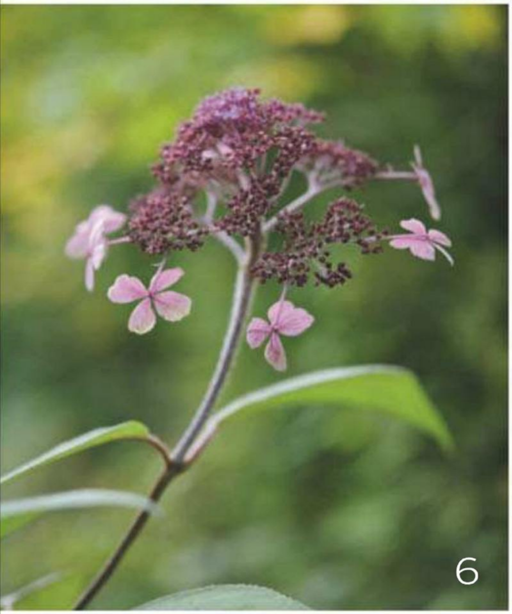
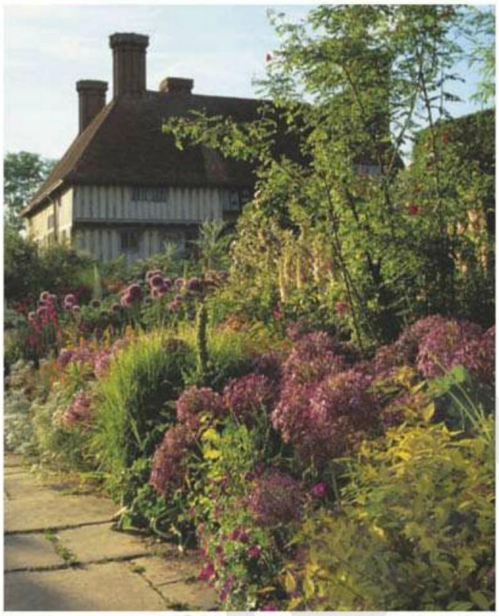
1 & 3 RICHARD BLOOM / GAP PHOTOS / GETTY IMAGES


NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES / JOHN MILLAR



MARTIN KIKULIS


JONATHAN BUCKLEY

Gardens to visit

Gillian was inspired by three of the UK's best Arts and Crafts gardens

Lytes Cary Manor, Somerset

Dating from the 15th century, the house and gardens were restored in Arts and Crafts style by Sir Walter Jenner in 1907, and is, says Gillian, "beautifully planted and maintained". A delight in summer, its large orchard (see page 20) is an autumnal treat.

OPEN 17 March to 4 November.

ADDRESS Somerton,
Somerset TA11 7HU.

TEL 01458 224471.

WEBSITE www.nationaltrust.org.uk

How Caple Court, Herefordshire

With magnificent views towards Welsh Mountains and the Forest of Dean, the 11-acre garden was laid out by Lennox Bertram Lee in glorious Anglo-Italian, Arts and Crafts style from 1901. Completed almost ten years later, it is now, says Gillian, "in a marvellously romantic state of seeming dishevelment". Although open to the public, it is often used for weddings, so check before planning a visit.

OPEN Daily from mid March to mid October.

ADDRESS How Caple Court,
Herefordshire HR1 4SX.

TEL 01989 740611.

WEBSITE www.howcaplecourt.co.uk

Great Dixter, Sussex

This famous Arts and Crafts garden, laid out by Nathaniel Lloyd and Edwin Lutyens from 1911, encloses a medieval manor house with "yew topiary and exuberant planting by Nathanial's son, the late Christopher Lloyd", says Gillian. GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers can discover some of Great Dixter's garden secrets at an exclusive reader day on 12 November (see page 16 for details).

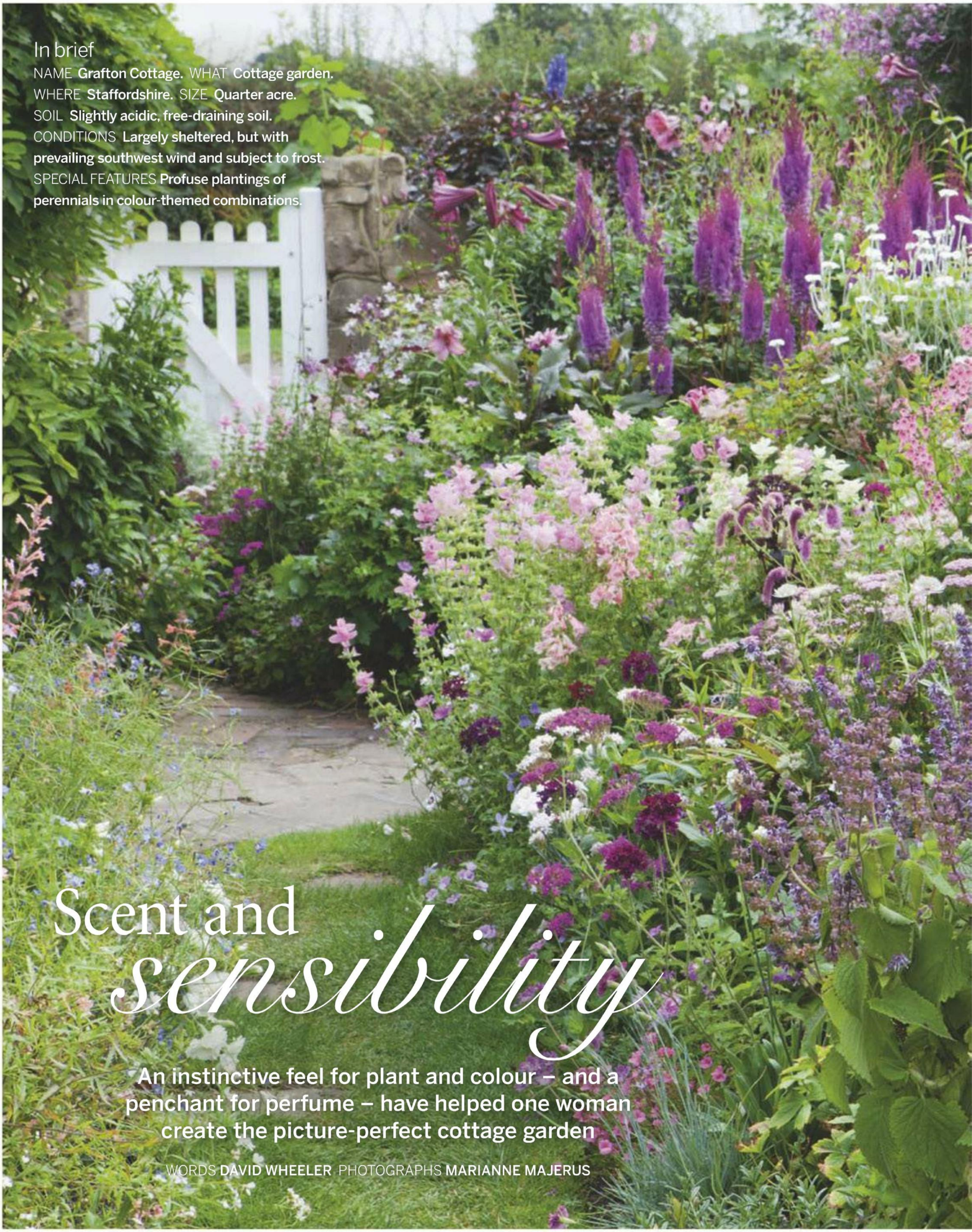
OPEN 1 April to 28 October, Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holidays.

ADDRESS Rye, Northiam, East
Sussex TN31 6PH.

TEL 01797 252878.

WEBSITE www.greatdixter.co.uk

WorldMags



In brief

NAME Grafton Cottage. **WHAT** Cottage garden.
WHERE Staffordshire. **SIZE** Quarter acre.
SOIL Slightly acidic, free-draining soil.
CONDITIONS Largely sheltered, but with prevailing southwest wind and subject to frost.
SPECIAL FEATURES Profuse plantings of perennials in colour-themed combinations.

Scent and *sensibility*

An instinctive feel for plant and colour – and a penchant for perfume – have helped one woman create the picture-perfect cottage garden

WORDS **DAVID WHEELER** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

Entrance to the cottage is through a mass of colourful and scented perennials and climbers, which immediately sets the tone of exuberance.

"Not only is Margaret a cottage gardener to her fingertips, she is one of this style's finest modern-day exponents"

I suppose it takes one plantaholic to recognise another. Within seconds of Margaret Hargreaves letting me through the door of her Staffordshire cottage I was pretty sure many hours of intensive plant-talk would follow. From her sitting-room window alone there was interest enough to keep us going for several hours, and when bulb catalogues and notebook appeared on the dining table I settled in for the long run.

Before you even reach the cottage door there is the 'garden without', a wide border between a boundary fence and the road which, in late winter, is replete with with crocuses, snowdrops and hellebores. Even then you can spot the emerging tell-tale signs of summer's great abundance, when something akin to a floral curtain of annuals and biennials all but masks the downstairs windows of this pretty whitewashed cottage.

Cottage gardener

The word 'cottage' is important here. Margaret Hargreaves is an unashamed cottage gardener, growing many of the old-fashioned plants her mother held dear when she was growing up. Not only is Margaret a cottage gardener to her fingertips, she is one of this style's finest modern-day exponents, taking her inspiration from the likes of Wollerton Old Hall in Shropshire, Eastgrove Cottage Garden in Worcestershire and the former walled garden at Hadspen House in Somerset, where Nori and Sandra Pope's rigorously colour-themed beds and borders once attracted garden enthusiasts from around the world.

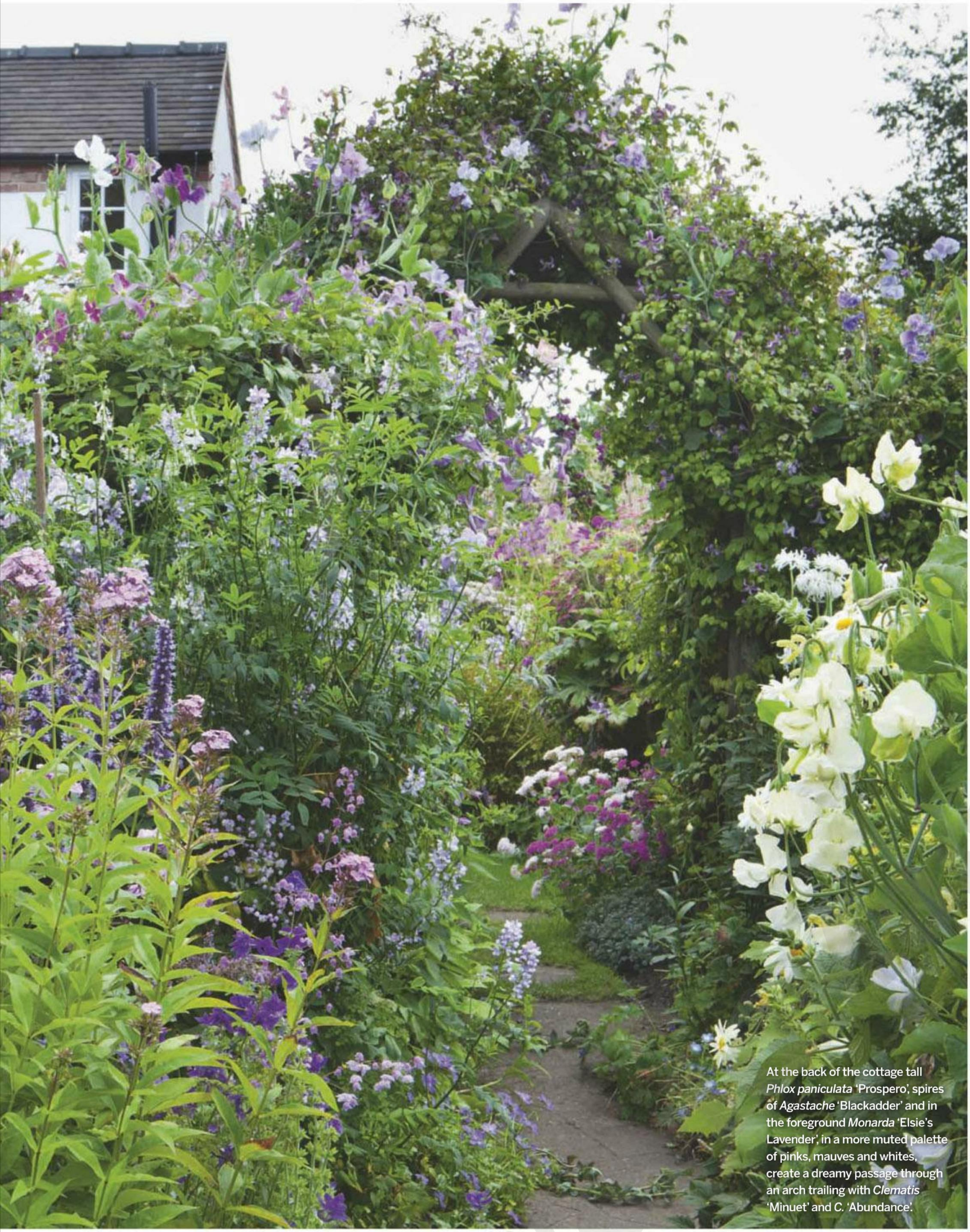
Margaret says she started to garden aged just three, and has worked her Grafton Cottage patch for the past 37 years. When she and her husband Peter bought the cottage it boasted no more than a few pigsties, a rectangular lawn and an old apple tree – the latter now magnificently shaped by Peter's expert pruning skills.

Not surprisingly, the Grafton beds have also been much enriched over recent decades, the sandy, slightly acidic soil now mounded a few centimetres above the network of sinuous brick paths that weave between them.

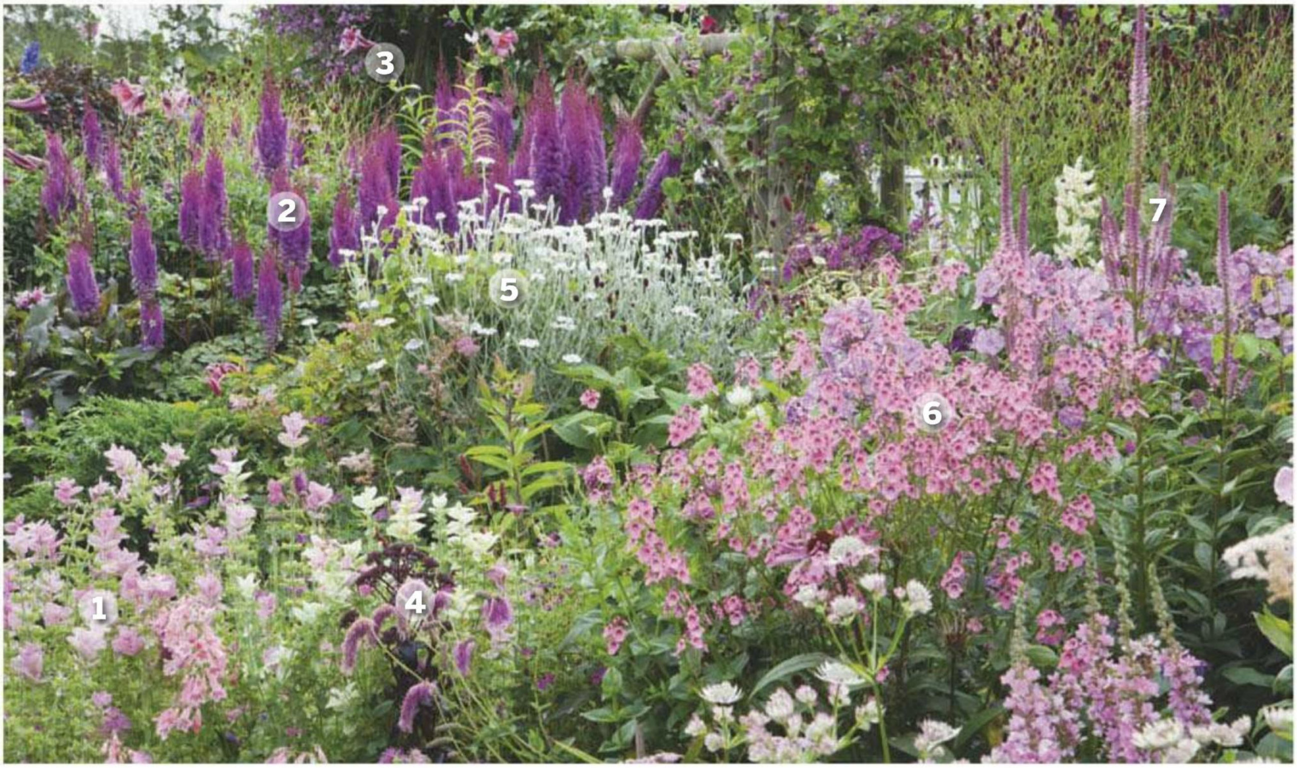
The garden peaks in high summer, looking its ravishing best with an array of (mostly) perennials from June to September. Unfortunately, as Margaret freely admits, this means "holding back a bit in other seasons", disallowing her the many flowering shrubs she would otherwise like to grow.

A leaky hosepipe takes care of irrigation throughout but, as with gardeners everywhere these days, both Margaret and ▷

continued on page 64

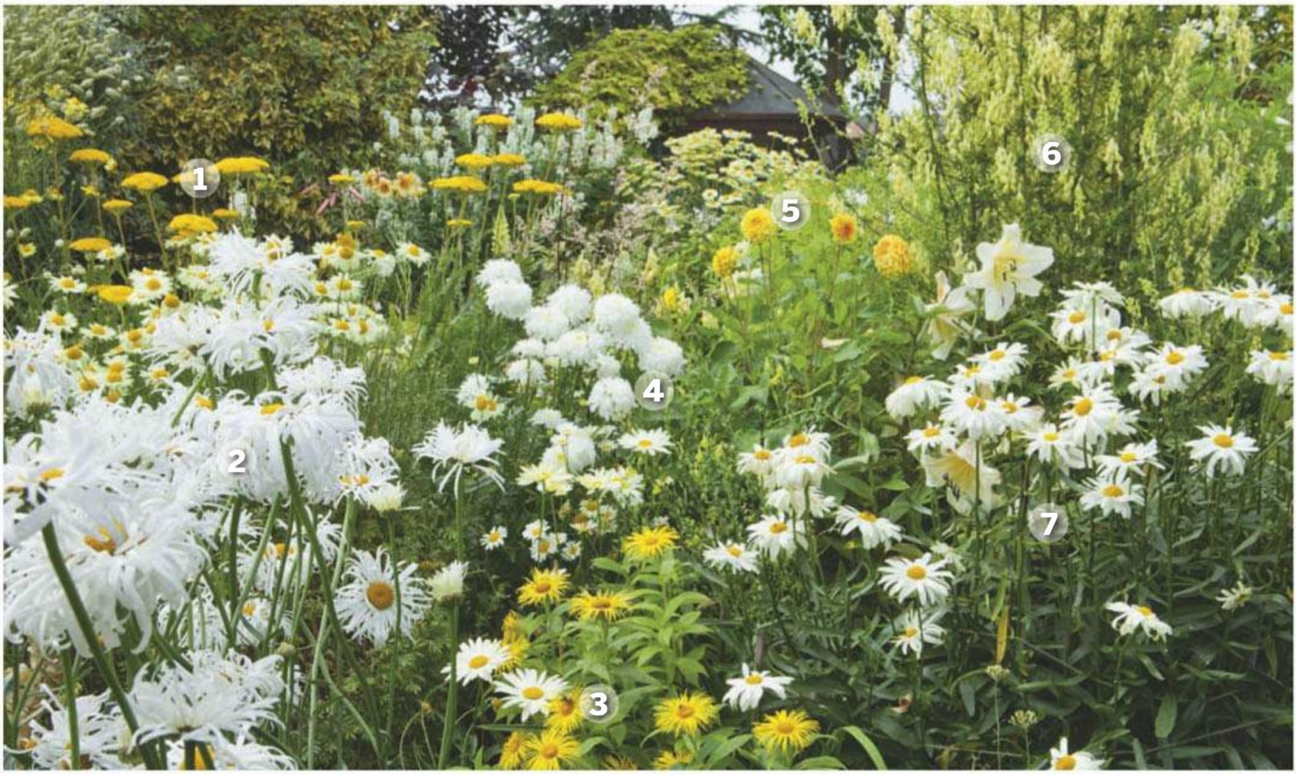


At the back of the cottage tall *Phlox paniculata* 'Prospero', spires of *Agastache* 'Blackadder' and in the foreground *Monarda* 'Elsie's Lavender', in a more muted palette of pinks, mauves and whites, create a dreamy passage through an arch trailing with *Clematis* 'Minuet' and *C.* 'Abundance'.



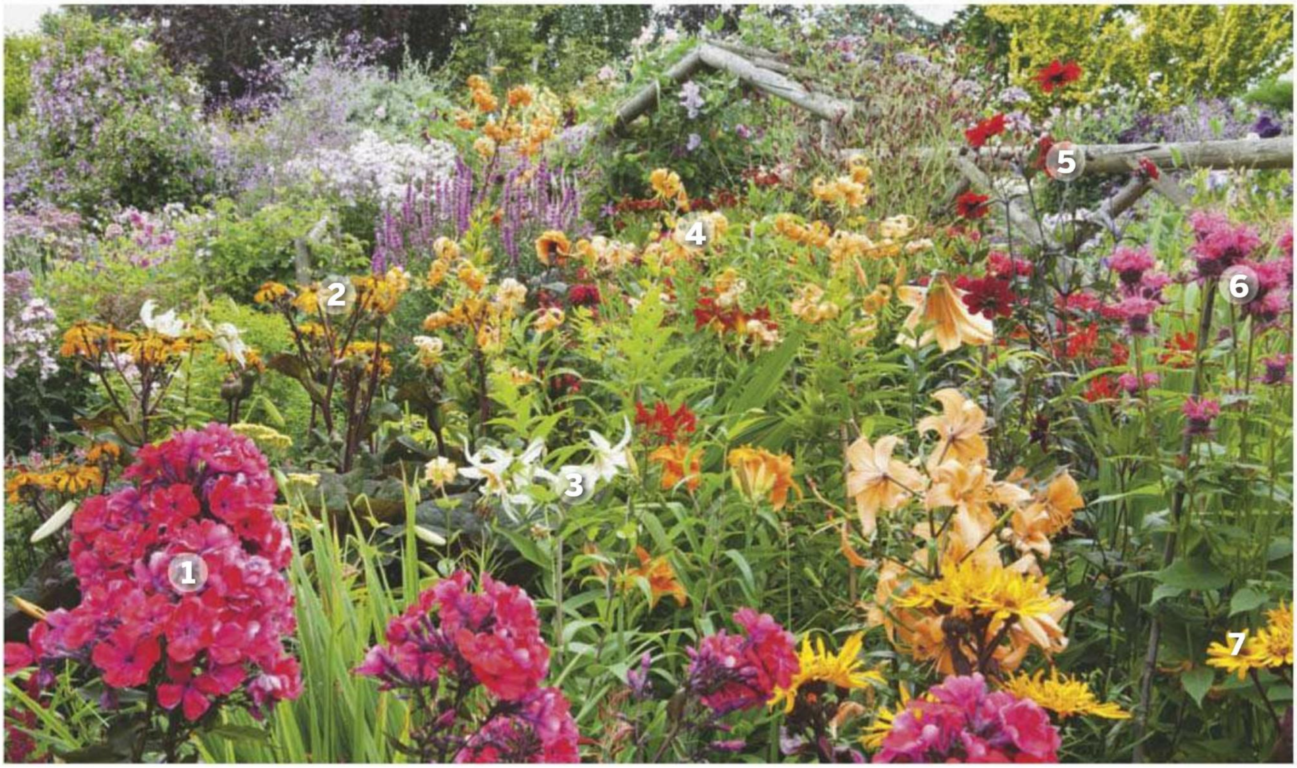
Pretty in pastels

A mix of pinks and whites create a delicate, feminine display at the front of Margaret's cottage.
1 *Salvia viridis* var. *comata* **2** *Astilbe chinensis* var. *taquetii* 'Purpurlanze' **3** *Lilium* Pink Perfection group **4** *Sanguisorba obtusa* **5** *Lychnis coronaria* Oculata Group **6** *Diascia personata* **7** *Veronicastrum* 'Erica'.



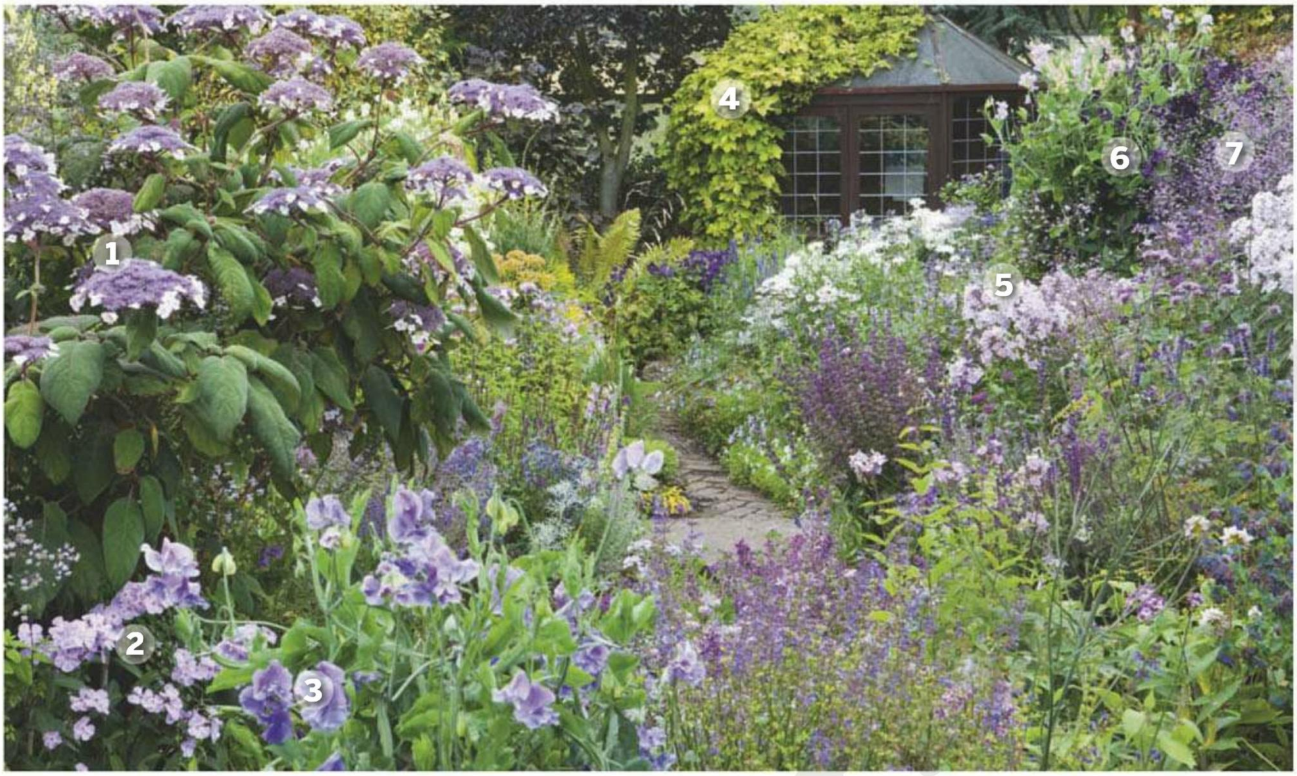
Golden glow

A simple border of white and yellow provides contrast to the vibrant mix of colour elsewhere and helps emphasise the cottage feel.
1 *Achillea filipendulina* 'Gold Plate' **2** *Leucanthemum* × *superbum* 'Phyllis Smith' **3** *Inula hookeri* **4** *Leucanthemum* × *superbum* 'Fiona Coghill' **5** *Dahlia* 'Golden Scepter' **6** *Aconitum vulparia* **7** *Leucanthemum* × *superbum* 'Sonnenschein'.



Bold and inviting

Hot reds mixed with golds and warm orange make an eye-catching display in front of the pretty covered arch.
1 *Phlox subulata* 'Scarlet Flame' **2** *Ligularia dentata* 'Desdemona' **3** *Lilium* 'Lady Alice' **4** *Lilium henryi* **5** *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Llandaff' **6** *Monarda* 'Balance'
7 *Ligularia* 'Britt Marie Crawford'.



Purple reign

A subtle blend of purples, mauves and blues, with accents of white and yellow, creates a calming corner by the summerhouse.
1 *Hydrangea macrophylla* **2** *Phlox paniculata* 'Eventide' **3** *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Noel Sutton' **4** *Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus' (golden hop) **5** *Phlox paniculata* 'Prospero'
6 *Clematis* 'Romantika' **7** *Thalictrum delavayi* 'Hewitt's Double'.

> *"Underpinning these rainbows is another of Margaret's prime needs: perfume"*

▷ Peter fear current low levels of rainfall, which may lead to watering restrictions at critical times in the gardening year.

Colour creates the overriding impact at Grafton Cottage, but unlike most cottage gardeners of the past, Margaret has (as the Popes did at Hadspen, although theirs was on a much bigger scale) grouped her plants for harmonious effect, resulting in beds of white and yellow, white and blue, white and pink, with – at the garden's epicentre – a volcanic eruption of screaming hot colours made up of phloxes, lilies, monardas, ligularias, crocosmias and daylilies.

Scent of success

Underpinning these rainbows is another of Margaret's prime needs: perfume. Hence an emphasis on sweet peas on trellis and walk-throughs and such powerfully scented roses as 'William Lobb', 'Ispahan' and 'Felicia' – manured and pruned in winter to promote a spectacular summer showing.

Gardens that rely heavily on the use of perennials face the age-old worry about unsightly gaps. Early, and once-only flowering plants with a large 'footprint' (lupins, for example) can leave big holes in the border when their moment has passed. Margaret has solved this problem by using an assortment of 'free range' (or unsupported) *Clematis viticella*, whose wandering stems she carefully manipulates to mask spent flowering stems or tussocks of gone-over foliage. Annuals also play a big part in this conceit, and many kinds are raised as part of a pre-planned scheme or to stand in the wings ready to do duty as required.

Such ideas emanate from gardeners who have seriously studied their craft. I picked up several more helpful tips from Margaret. One is that you shouldn't go round the garden too soon in the year looking for winter failures. "Plants can surprise you," she says, "by delaying their recovery long after bad weather." Another bit of advice helps to banish ugly staking: Margaret cuts back her signature hollyhocks when they're just about 20cm tall. "It's a kind of Chelsea chop, but done earlier in the year, resulting in less lofty, self-supporting plants – and an extra flowering stem or two." Hats off to that. □

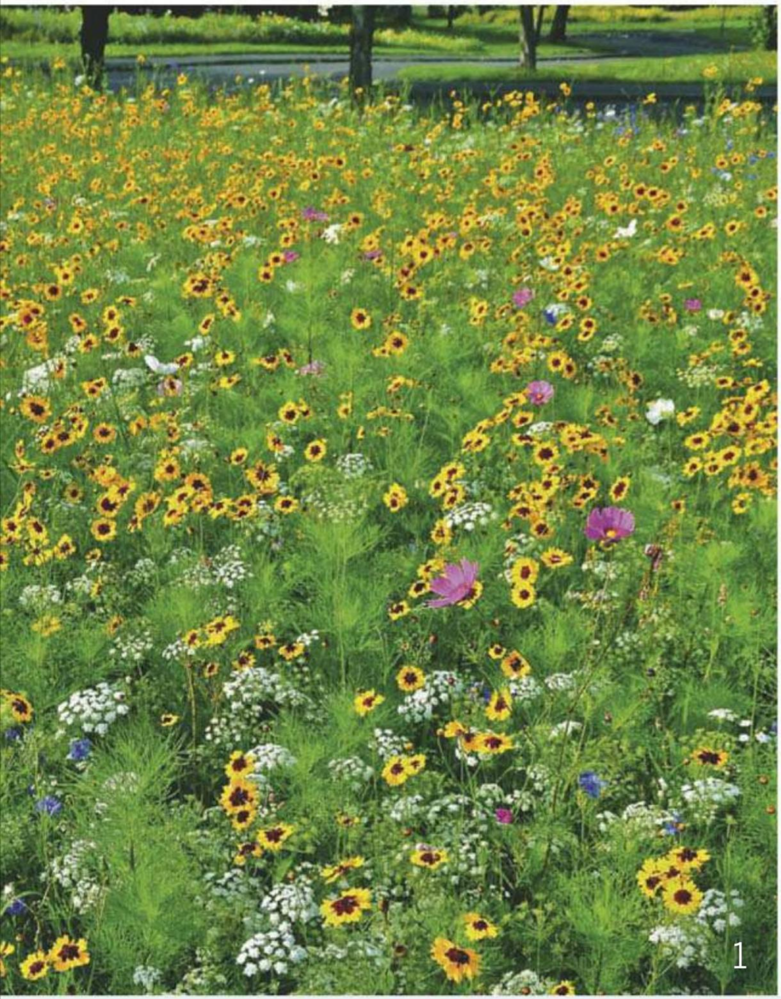
USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Grafton Cottage, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffordshire DE13 8AL

TEL 01283 713639

OPEN Various dates through summer as part of National Gardens Scheme, including 5 August (11.30am-5pm), www.ngs.org.uk

A rustic fence and archway draped with *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *Clematis* 'Abundance' defines an area of rich planting, much of which has good drought tolerance.



1 One of Nigel's 'Pictorial Meadows', which flower for months without intervention, featuring *Coreopsis tinctoria*, *Ammi majus* and *Cosmos bipinnatus*.

2 Sharrow School's green roof has been awarded 'local nature reserve' status – the world's first green roof to be so recognised.

3 The grass verges around this Sheffield estate used to be used for fly tipping. Now local children enjoy the meadows.

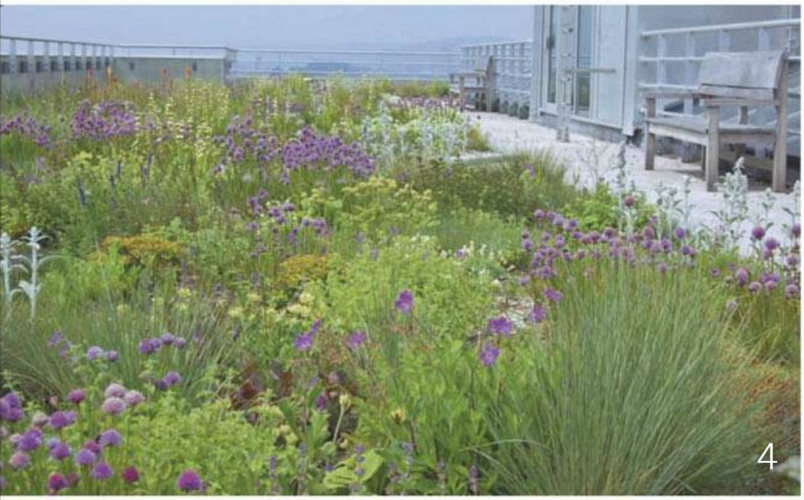
Northern soul

A quiet revolution in ecological landscaping is breathing new pastoral life into once deprived urban centres – and it's all thanks to a pair of visionaries from the University of Sheffield

WORDS NOËL KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHS NIGEL DUNNETT AND JANE SEBIRE

Over the past 20 years, the city of Sheffield, once linked firmly in the public imagination with steelworks and smokestacks, has increasingly been seen as a city trying some radical approaches to public horticulture – with some interesting spin-offs for private gardeners. Photographs of dramatic swathes of colourful annuals, drifts of perennials and meadows on rooftops have made an impact nationally, while research papers and conference appearances by two of the University of Sheffield's landscape department, Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough (now both professors) have made a strong impression on fellow professionals and academics internationally.

Having been employed as consultants on London's Olympic Park, Nigel, James, and the 'Sheffield School' are set to see even wider recognition for their unique bringing together of horticulture, ecology and landscape design. Nigel and James are men driven by a love of plants, of biodiversity, a strong desire to beautify public space, but also by the Enlightenment spirit of scientific discovery. Their work with plants is built on a belief that proposals for planting have to be backed by evidence, and that the science of plant ecology can offer us a set of tools for designing novel and visually rich plant communities. Organic dogma and pseudo-science receive short shrift, and there is no



4 Nigel's planting for the green roof at Moorgate Crofts Business Centre in Rotherham, was designed to require no irrigation and little maintenance.

5 Nigel puts a new flower mix seeded turf through its paces in his own garden as a key part to his research.

6 Similarly, for many years James has used his allotment overlooking the Sheffield suburbs to trial new plants.

BELOW Nigel Dunnett (left) and James Hitchmough are gaining wider recognition.

romantic attachment to growing only locally native plants. In talking to them, there is a wonderful sense of cutting through feel-good verbiage to what really works, but also the message that ecologically based planting schemes need to have what James calls “the wow factor”.

Down to earth

Neither James nor Nigel are ivory-tower academics: both are involved in the practicalities of implementing landscape design. An example has been Sharrow School in Sheffield where Nigel designed a green roof that was awarded ‘local nature reserve’ status by Natural England in 2009 – the first green roof in the world to be so recognised. This project encapsulates the real distinctiveness of Sheffield thinking. “Unlike the usual garden tradition,” says Nigel, “We don't so much concentrate on the value of the individual plant, but more on the combination as a community. What sets us apart from dogmatic ecologists is our emphasis on aesthetics and the human experience.”

PORTRAIT: UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

> *“What sets us apart from dogmatic ecologists is our emphasis on aesthetics and the human experience”*

Sheffield School planting aims to bring the beauty and wonder of plant life to everyone, including those who live on deprived housing estates. To James, one aspect of success is “when a bloke with a pit bull on a chain comes up to you, and says, ‘you know mate, this [he indicates a field of flowers] is the only thing that gets me up in the morning’.”

Nigel and James are the pioneers of ‘horticultural ecology’ – the application of plant ecology science to designed plantings. “I have spent much of my life understanding how to assemble sustainable, designed ▷

WorldMags

7 The project at Sheffield Botanical Gardens was the first time Nigel and James collaborated on their planting.

8 James's prairie meadow at RHS garden Wisley uses a mix of 25 species of perennials to create a long flowering season.

9 PhD students from Sheffield monitor plant growth on the green roof at Moorgate Crofts Business Centre in Rotherham.

10 Social enterprise company Green Estate worked with Nigel to transform an area dogged by drug users into surroundings the locals take pride in.

▷ plant communities that are attractive to the public," says James. "In particular, how to apply the ecological rules that govern what can be designed… these rules are universal and blind, they don't distinguish between wild and cultivated plants."

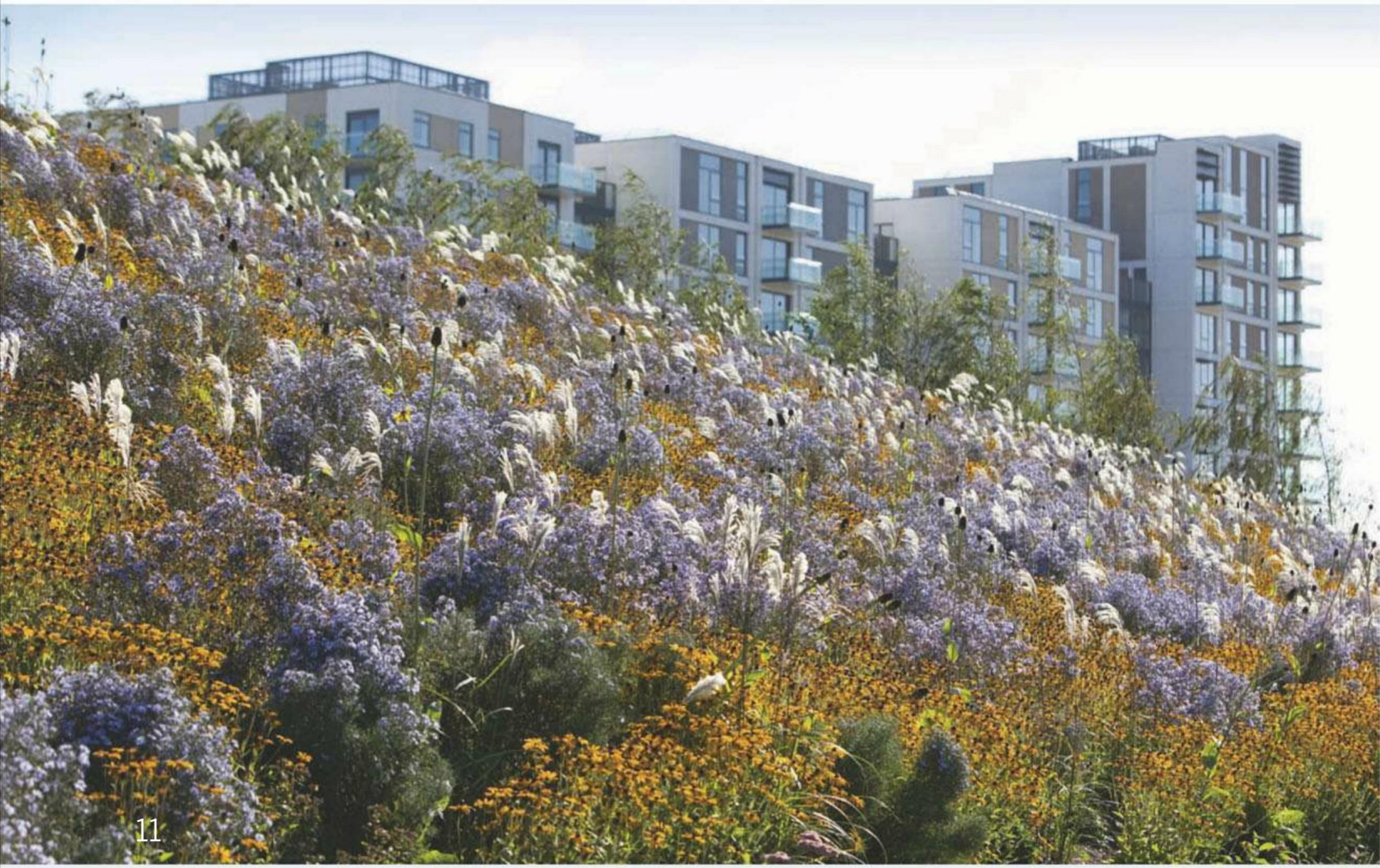
James has concentrated on looking at particular 'reference communities', and how plant species from them can be used in cultivation to create long-lasting, bio-diverse and low-maintenance combinations.

Crucial to James's work is the use of seed mixtures to establish ornamental plant combinations. These create a dense community of plants, which "creates a more genuine community" where plant ecological preferences and competition between plants decide where they grow.

Nigel's interest is in "urban environments that are rich in vegetation and nature", particularly "at the smaller scale, in gardens, urban parks, and on and around buildings and in high-density developments". He pioneered research into green roofs in Britain, and went on to look at rain gardens, where water management is integrated into the design and planting of a garden.

Such concepts have been promoted through public commissions as well as show gardens at Chelsea, but his greatest achievement has been the exuberant range of seed mixes for parks and roadside planting, developed with the social enterprise Green Estate and sold under the brand name of 'Pictorial Meadows'. The annual mixes in particular provide a cheap and easy way for local authorities to create dramatic impacts on a large scale; they can also be very successful in domestic gardens. Seeing families in parks surrounded by these flowers

"Sheffield School planting aims to bring the wonder of plant life to everyone, including those who live on housing estates"



BELOW LEFT Bold combinations of pink Joe pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum*) with tall tickseed (*Coreopsis tripteris*) are typical of James's plantings.

11 Athletes staying in the Olympic Village will look out over this stunning display of *Rudbeckia maxima*, *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii*, *Miscanthus sinensis* and *Aster turbinellus* created by Nigel and James.

BELOW Part of Nigel's 'New Wild Garden', which won Silver Gilt at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2011.

is a powerful reminder of the capacity of plants to bring joy into people's lives.

Behind Nigel and James is a team of postgraduate students, with each thesis putting into place another piece of the puzzle of how plants grow, reproduce and compete in artificially created ecosystems. Ye Hang, from Hangzhou in China, for example, has been monitoring the hardiness of South African bulbs and dwarf shrubs as part of James's work on this country's flora.

Work on the Drakensberg grasslands has already led to new types of planting, such as that used in the South African garden in the Olympic Park. Ye says she came to Sheffield because "it is ahead of other universities in applying design to horticulture". In addition, Sheffield graduates (including myself) are a steadily growing group in the landscape profession, whose work has implications for how new plantings will be carried out.

ODA, MARTIN HUGHES-JONES/ALAMY

> "Seeing families in parks is a powerful reminder of the capacity of plants to bring joy into people's lives"

With their recent commission as planting design consultants for the Olympic Park showing what is possible, the Sheffield School of urban horticultural ecology will hopefully blaze a trail for others. James, Nigel and their colleagues have shown how we can bring together sustainable landscape management and life-affirming beauty for the whole community. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

- Find out more about studying landscape at Sheffield at www.shef.ac.uk/landscape.
- Nigel's seed mixes, developed in conjunction with Green Estate, are available from **Pictorial Meadows**. Tel 0114 267 7635, www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk.

Worldmags

In brief

WHAT A mix of herbaceous plants, shrubs and grasses that will work hard in a small garden, providing colourful flowers, characterful foliage and heady scents.

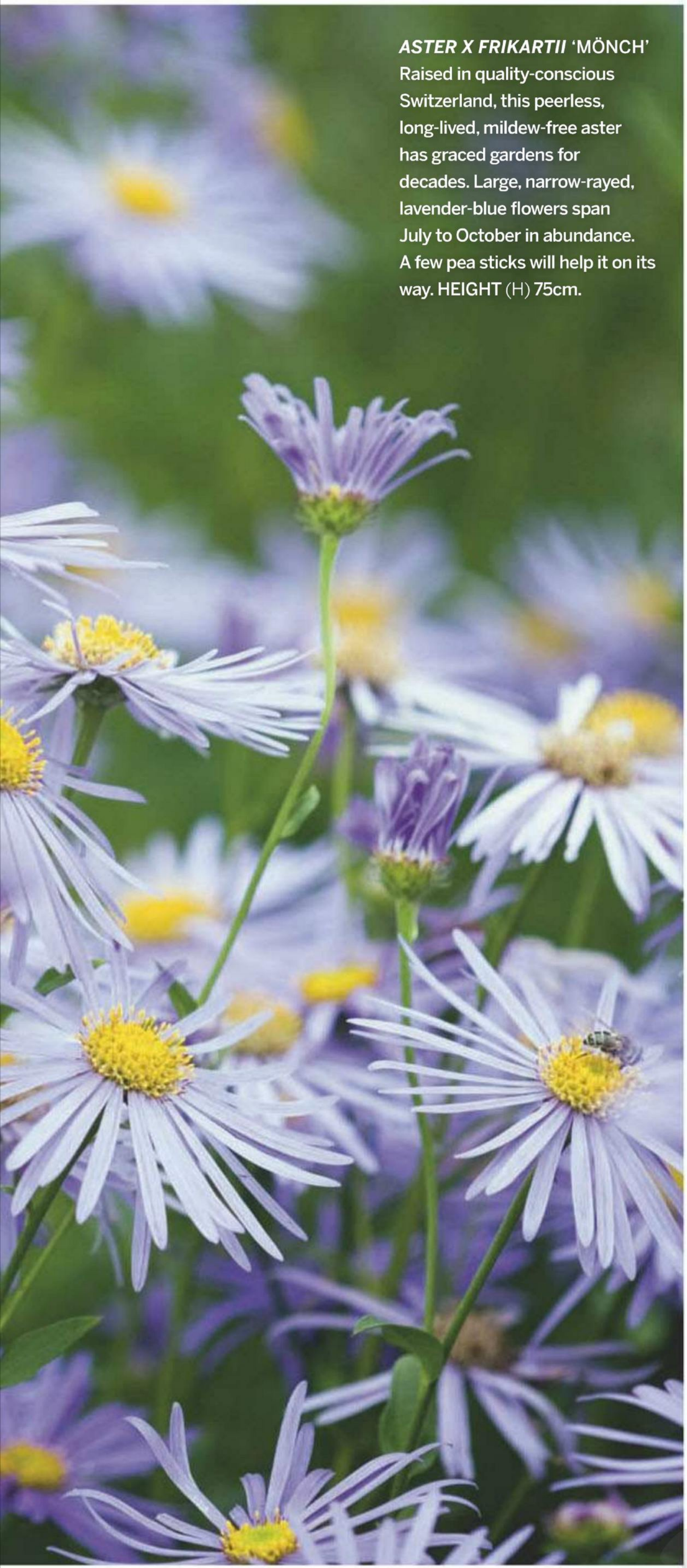
SEASON Most of the plants chosen have a long flowering season and will last throughout summer and into late autumn. Some will flower until winter.

CONDITIONS Plants will mix happily into planting schemes in open ground, while some are equally happy grown in pots.

Hard-working plants for small gardens

When space is at a premium, your plants need to work even harder to create a harmonious effect

WORDS **GRAHAM GOUGH**



ASTER X FRIKARTII **'MÖNCH'**
Raised in quality-conscious Switzerland, this peerless, long-lived, mildew-free aster has graced gardens for decades. Large, narrow-rayed, lavender-blue flowers span July to October in abundance. A few pea sticks will help it on its way. HEIGHT (H) 75cm.

CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS

Professional singer turned nurseryman Graham Gough is the owner of Marchants Hardy Plants in Laughton, East Sussex

Ironically, owners of both large and small gardens are confronted by the same inherent problems when it comes to dealing with scale, albeit at opposite ends of the spectrum, and both face the far greater problem of choosing the right plants and how to use them most effectively. However, it is the owner of the small garden, with its constricted volume, who faces the greatest challenge and a satisfactory and coherent space is more likely to result from a decisive and disciplined approach – and an adherence to the idea that less is more – than by giving into whims, fancies and clutter.

Luckily, plants are incredibly tolerant, but an understanding of factors such as site, soil and light will help you develop your plantsmanship and allow you to get the best from your plants. Observe how walls, fences, trees (whether your own or those of your neighbours) affect precipitation and soil moisture, and how these same objects affect the pattern of light and shade throughout the day. Once you have got to grips with these factors you will be able to site plants to suit their needs with greater care. And you will want to start with trees.

Top of the plant hierarchy, trees will bring to the garden scale, volume, shade and screening, too. The choice of tree and its eventual size is critical but be warned as they can become something of a *bête noir* for the smaller garden, sapping the ground of nutrients and moisture. They are easier to sit under than to plant under – few plants thrive in dry shade.

Shrubs are indispensable anchor stones, perfect in scale for the smaller garden. Their potential longevity will be an important factor when choosing them, as will their eventual size. Slow growing shrubs are much easier to manage but don't forget to consider the pros and cons of evergreen versus deciduous, or fall into the trap of restricting yourself to small shrubs only. If you do the effect created will be mean. I would sooner grow one large shrub than several dinky ones. My own choice would be for a large peppery scented box from ▷

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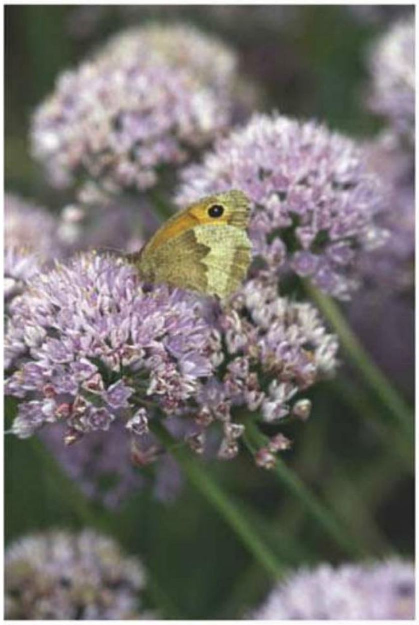
> *"As you will be living cheek by jowl with the plants in your small garden the foliage should be the best of its kind"*

▷ which to create a commanding green statue of topiary. Even if topiary is not your thing, you could try your hand at whacky shrub pruning by cleaning up the lower stems of their growth. Not only will this allow more light to find its way into lower tier plantings but it will also create an eccentric and theatrical air. Several shrubs lend themselves to this treatment, for example *Mahonia*, *Sambucus*, *Osmanthus*, *Viburnum*, etc. It also pays to think outside the box. I remember seeing in one small space rosemary and *Artemisia arborescens* trained against a wall, forming wonderfully effective cascades of blue and silver respectively. True, shrubs like trees will also rob the soil of nutrients but a restorative annual mulch should benefit all the plants.

While it is immensely important you give consideration to length of flowering, our obsession with flowers and colour can sometimes lead us to neglect the most important part of a plant's anatomy: its foliage. As you will be living cheek by jowl with the plants in your small garden the foliage should be the best of its kind. Lucky then that among the herbaceous plants that form the lower, most colourful tier, there exists a huge array of textures, shapes and colours to draw on. Take time and care with your choice and juxtapose to create a rich woven tapestry.

Be brave enough to plant in small drifts, even to the exclusion of variety, and not singly, grasses being an exception. Their striking linear forms need to be enjoyed as individuals and they need as much light as possible to show off their glistening heads. Be bold: include lofty grasses and perennials too. If they have good seed heads, better still. Indispensable annuals, the brightest, gayest performers, will crave light and sunshine too. Choose those with character and good foliage and dot them freely through borders to create a brilliant jewel-like effect. □

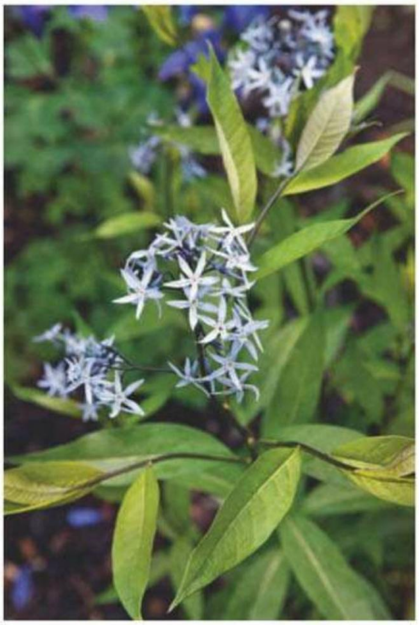
- Graham's choice of small-garden staples continues over the next six pages. ▷



TORIE CHUGG / GARDEN COLLECTION

ALLIUM SENESCENS* SUBSP. *GLAUCUM

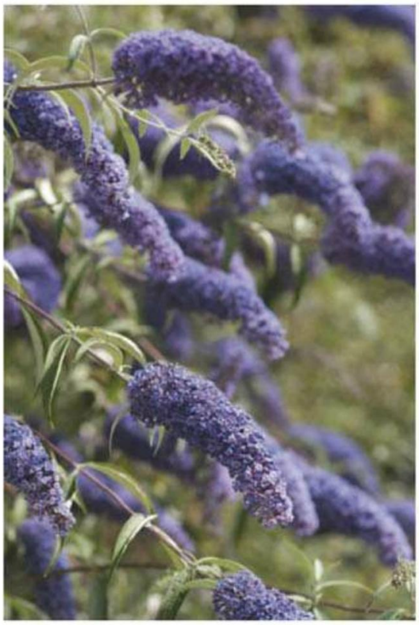
A curio onion whose twisted glaucous foliage amuses and endears. Domed lilac-pink flowers attract summer insects. For border front, requiring only sun and drainage. H 20cm.



ANDREA JONES IMAGES / ALAMY

AMSONIA ORIENTALIS

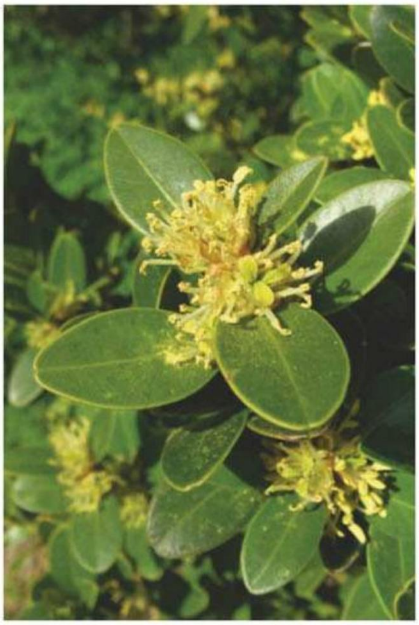
This gently spreading perennial is surprisingly uncommon given its ease of culture, simple starry spode-blue flowers and general good nature. Sadly, it dislikes chalk. H 40cm.



JULIE DANSEREAU / GAP PHOTOS

***BUDDLEJA DAVIDII* NANHO BLUE (='MONGO')**

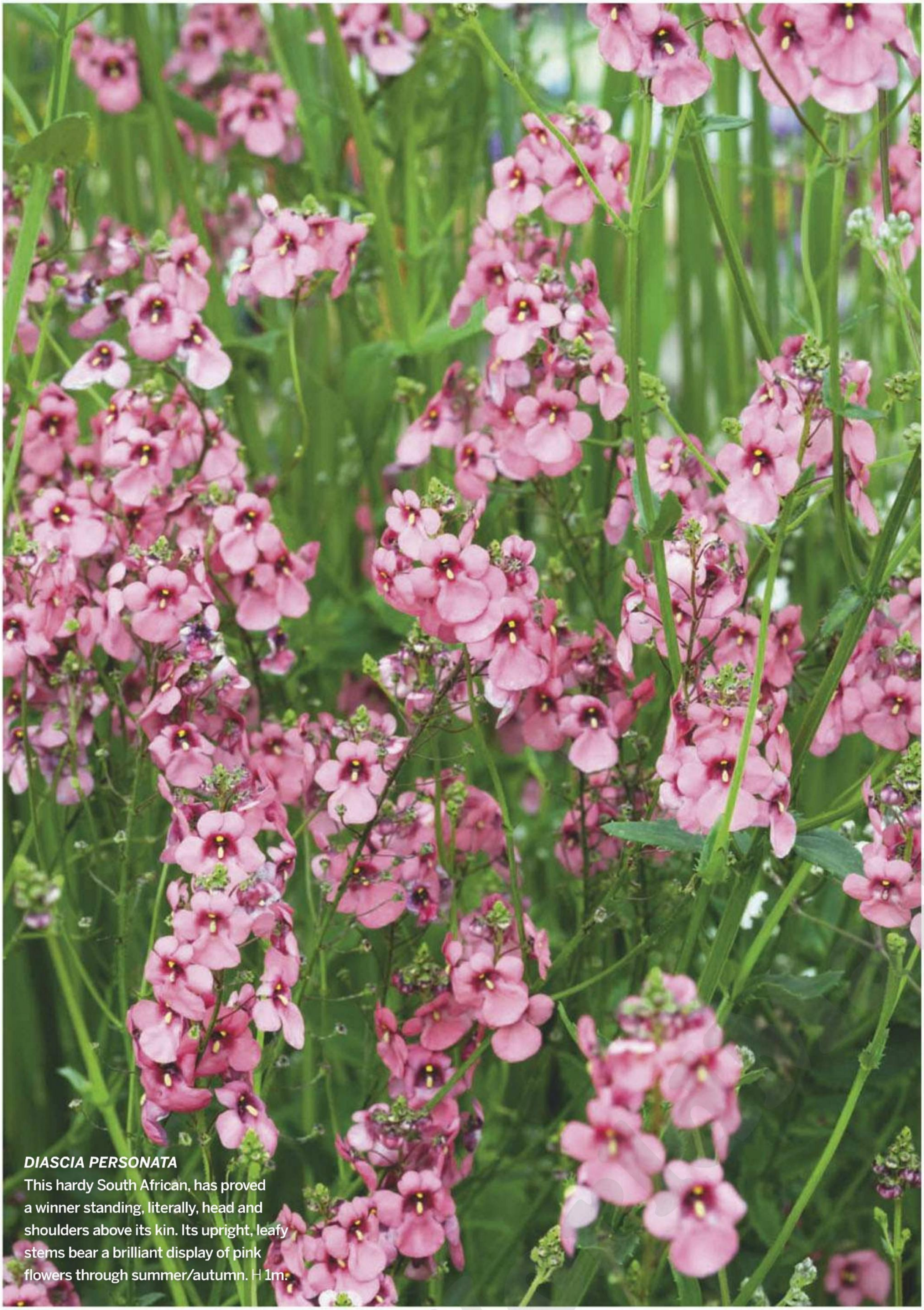
This shrub is included for three reasons: it's small (pruned annually), has tea-scented flowers and is a lure for butterflies. H 150cm.



BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY

BUXUS BALEARICA

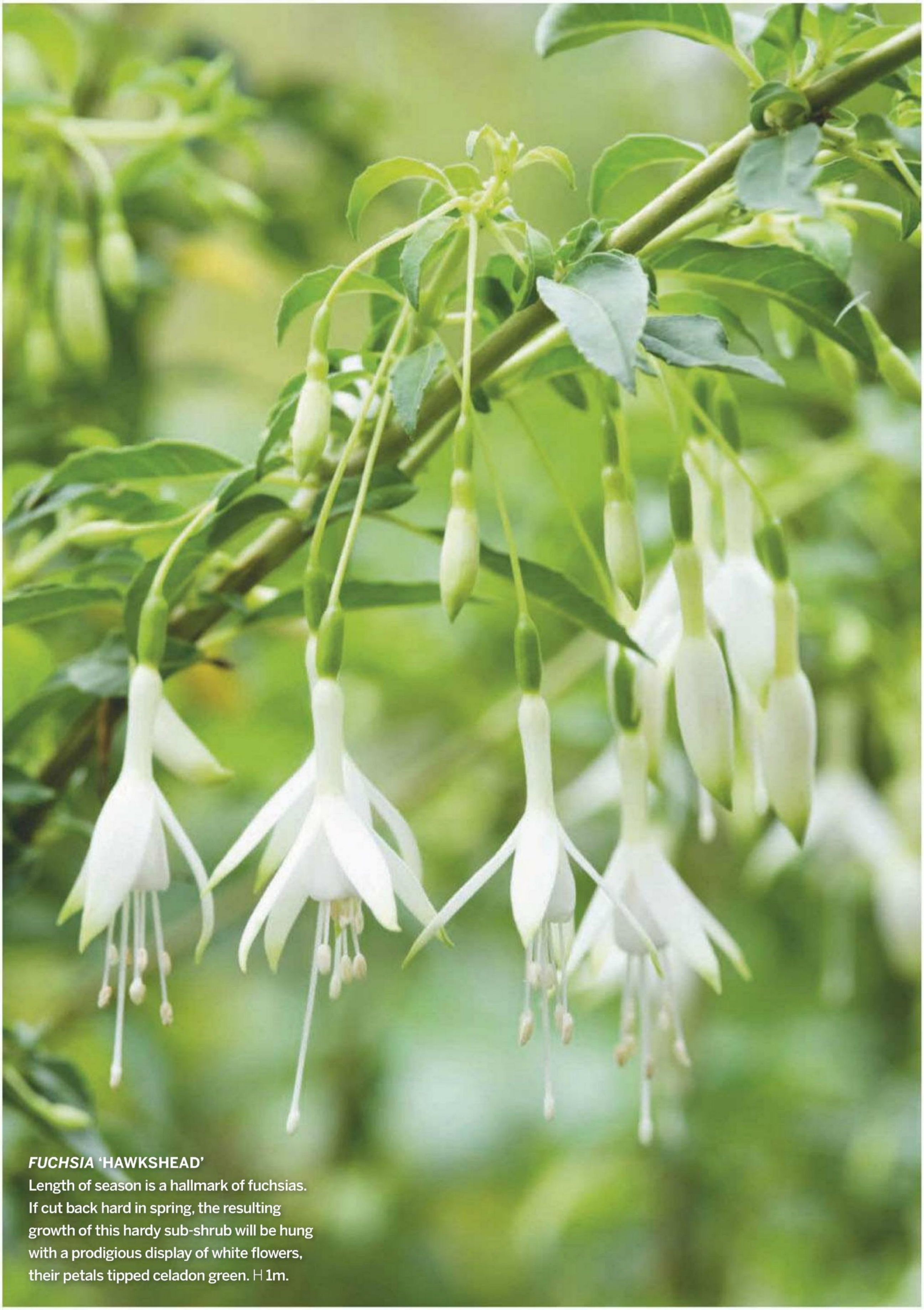
This slow-growing box from the Balearics forms a pleasing airy evergreen shrub, its large glossy-surfaced, olive green leaves playful with the light. Scented flowers too. H 3m.



DIASCIA PERSONATA

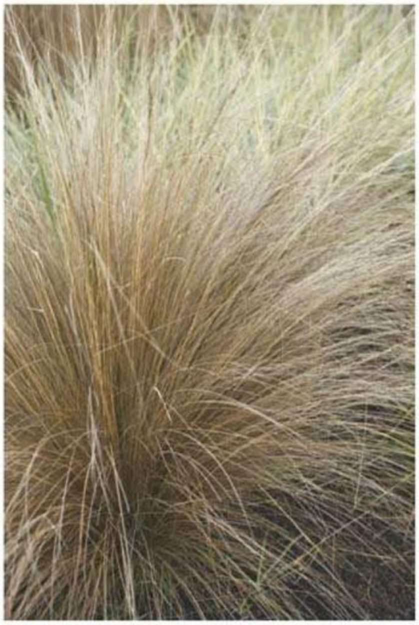
This hardy South African, has proved a winner standing, literally, head and shoulders above its kin. Its upright, leafy stems bear a brilliant display of pink flowers through summer/autumn. H 1m.

LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS



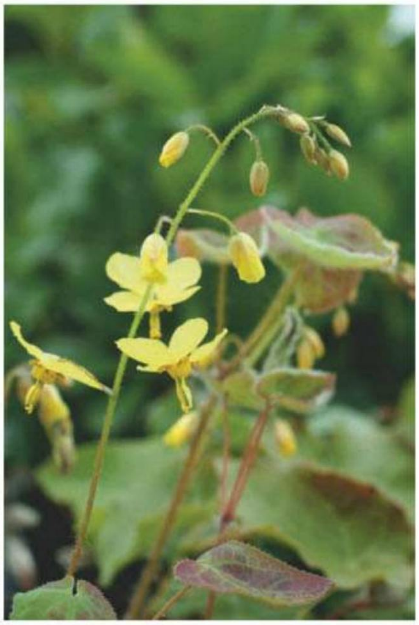
***FUCHSIA* 'HAWKSHEAD'**
Length of season is a hallmark of fuchsias. If cut back hard in spring, the resulting growth of this hardy sub-shrub will be hung with a prodigious display of white flowers, their petals tipped celadon green. H 1m.

HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS



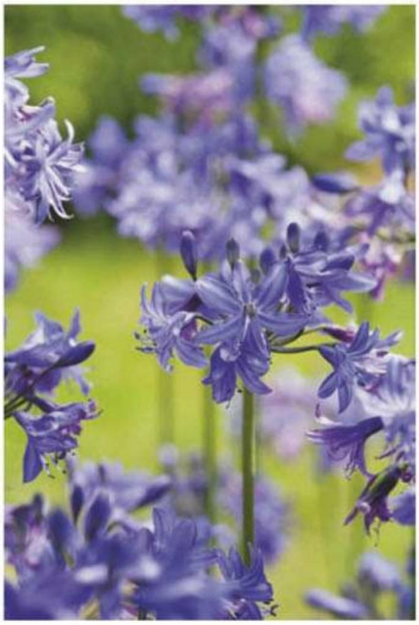
MATT ANKER / GAP PHOTOS

***CHIONOCHLOA CONSPICUA* 'RUBRA'**
New Zealand tussock grass demands careful placement in small gardens but its hardiness, ease of management, elegance of architectural line and beauty make it a must-have. H 1.2m.



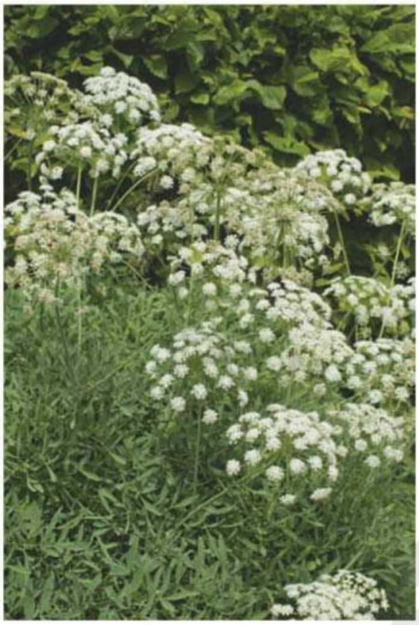
MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY

***EPIMEDIUM* X *PERRALCHICUM* 'FRÖHNLEITEN'**
After cutting back and mulching (February), this hybrid barrenwort sports handsome leaves and delicate lemon flowers. H 35cm.



MARK BOLTON / GAP PHOTOS

***AGAPANTHUS* 'LILLIPUT'**
As its name suggests, this is a small-growing agapanthus possessing brilliantly rich blue flowers in summer. Its neatness and height lends it successfully to potwork. H 35cm.



FREDERIC DIDILLON / GAP PHOTOS

LASERPITIUM SILER
This long-lived umbellifer possesses remarkable, incised, greyish foliage, topped with domed parasol-like heads of white flowers. Caraway-scented seeds follow. H 100cm

Start with the basics

- Nurture your soil – an annual mulch of compost will keep your soil in good condition and suppress greedy weeds.
- Remember the expression: 'a penny for the plant and a pound for the planting'. A scoop of potting compost mixed into the planting hole will give plants a bonny start.
- Walls and fences can create rain shadows and dry soil in which plants will not thrive. Plant climbers up to 60cm away and train back on to the wall using twigs for support.
- Get to know your plants and gauge their eating habits. Not all plants respond to being fed.

Choosing plants

- You'll generally be living with foliage longer than flowers, so always try to choose plants with interesting foliage.
- Choose plants with a long season of flowering. Include late summer/autumn flowering plants and grasses to extend seasonal interest.
- Balance flower sizes between large and small. Too many bulky flowers, such as dahlias, will overcrowd a small space.
- Hot colours (red, yellow, orange), are dominant while blues, mauves and pinks are recessive. Use them cleverly to create an illusion of space.
- Be creative with hedging and include evergreens such as box, *Phillyrea* and yew. Think originally about their shape and use – hedges used as screens can add considerable mystery to a small garden.
- Temper the use of variegated plants. A little goes a very way.
- Moist, shaded areas lend themselves to ferns, but be discerning; grow only the most handsome and use sparingly as accents.

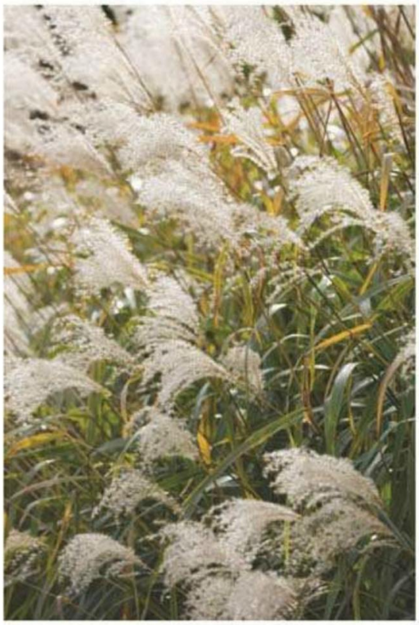
WorldMags

Where to get ideas

- Keep a notebook with you when you visit gardens and shows. The late, great plantsman Christopher Lloyd used his assiduously, so do the same.
- Visit small gardens, particularly those found in towns and villages. The National Gardens Scheme (www.ngs.org.uk) abounds in them. Its informative regional booklets provide comprehensive details and, importantly, the size of gardens.
- The RHS's small gardens at Wisley remain popular for ideas. Similarly, the small creative gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show provide a source of inspiration.
- Don't be afraid to copy any novel ideas you come across. Most gardening ideas have evolved or, more blatantly, been plagiarised from elsewhere.
- Familiarise yourself with boundary laws, such as those governing the cutting of neighbours' trees and hedges. Diplomacy is better than a court appearance.

Where to buy plants

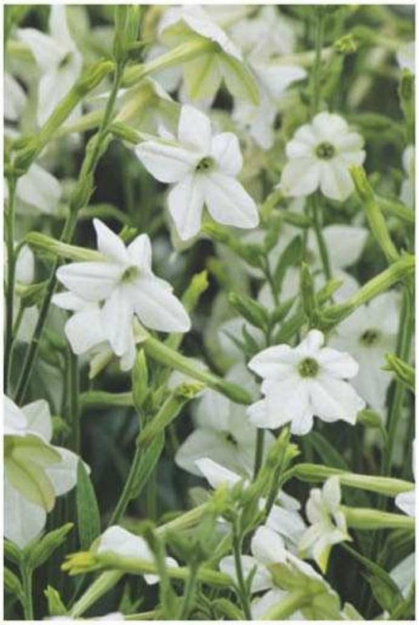
- Support small specialist nurseries, which will generously offer sound advice. Find listings in the plant lover's bible *RHS Plantfinder* or online at http://apps.rhs.org.uk/rhsplantfinder
- Choose healthy-looking, young plants with a strong, dense structure.
- Don't be tempted to buy plants in large pots, you'll be paying for the compost, not the plant. However, plants in smaller pots will benefit from being potted on for a time before planting out.
- Choose plants resistant to disease (mildew, rust), so you can avoid the need to spray with chemicals. But keep an eye out for sap-sucking insects and deal with these as kindly as you can.



PERNILLA BERGDAHL / GAP PHOTOS

***MISCANTHUS SINENSIS* 'KLEINE FÖNTANE'**

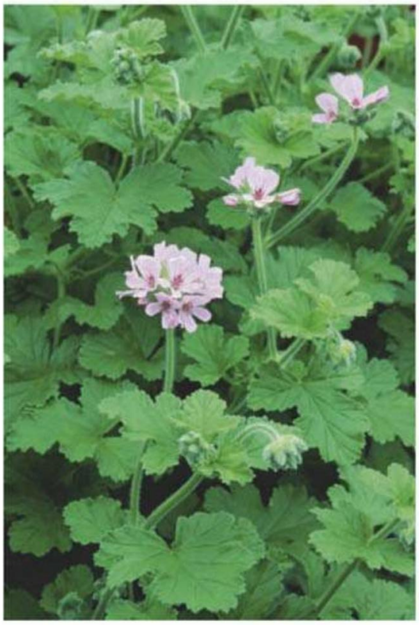
The silky drooping flower heads are profuse in a shimmering pink ageing to buff. These 'small fountains' persist into winter. H 1.25m.



J S SIRA / GAP PHOTOS

NICOTIANA AFFINIS

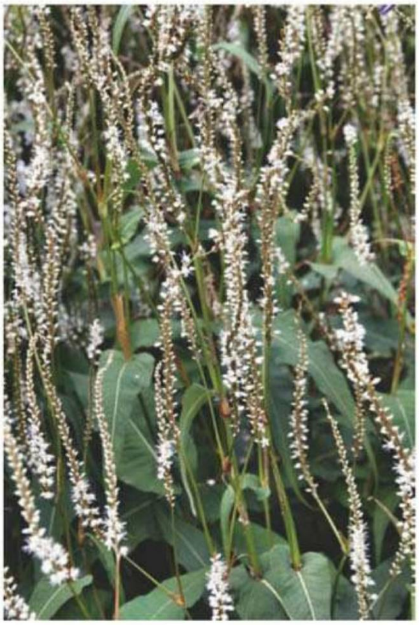
Scent is so much more important in a small garden. This annual's fragrance spills into the evening air contrasting with the bouquet rising from your chosen tipple. H 90cm.



HOWARD RICE / GAP PHOTOS

***PELARGONIUM* 'ATTAR OF ROSES'**

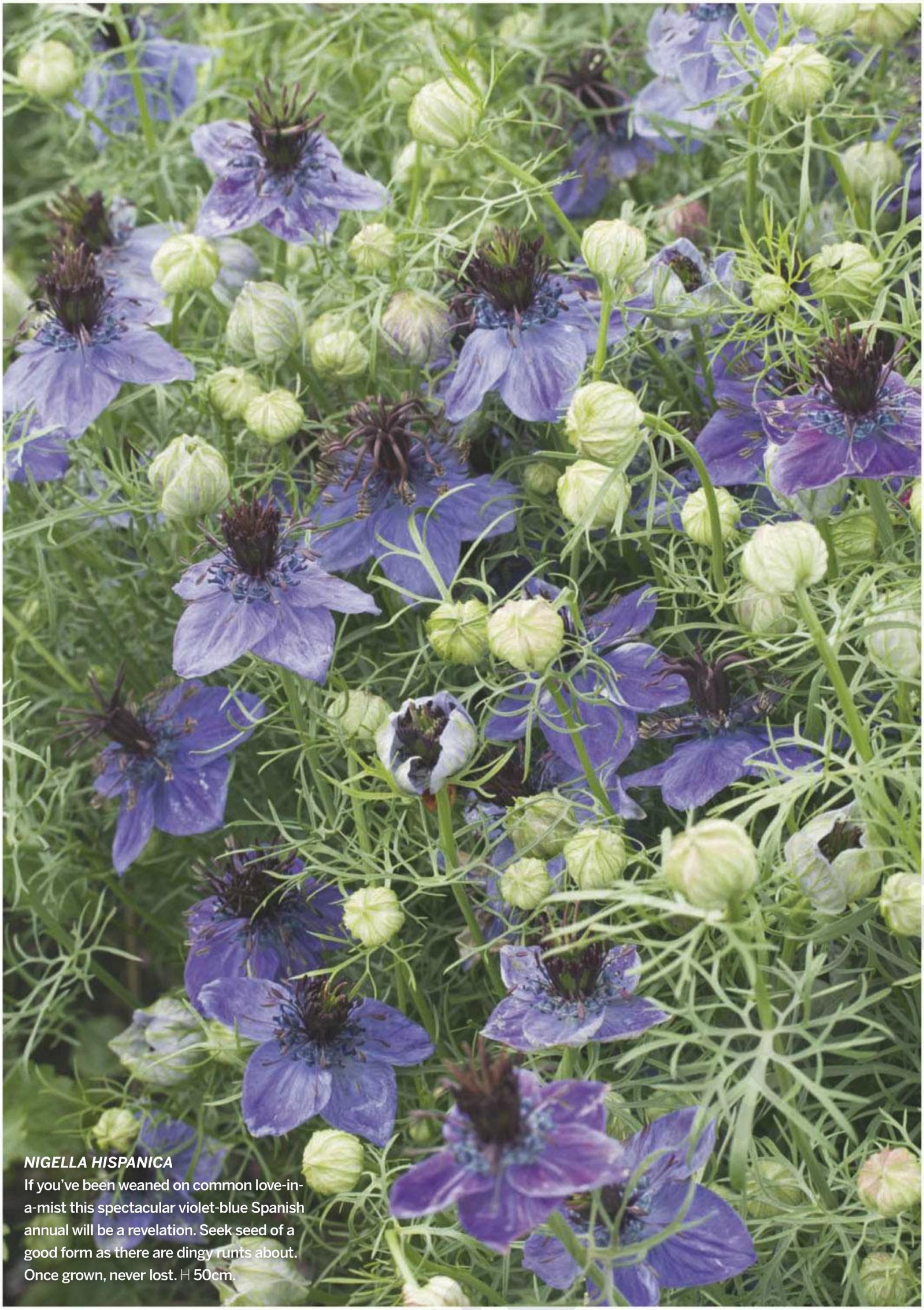
Its pink flowers may be modest but a pinch of its frost-tender, foliage reveals an exotic fragrance of rose attar. A must for planting in close encountered pots. H 45cm.



MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS

***PERSICARIA AMPLEXICAULIS* 'ALBA'**

Generally a thuggish troupe of plants but this white form's territorial ambitions are easily checked. A dark background will highlight well the wispy tapered flowers. H 90cm.



NIGELLA HISPANICA

If you've been weaned on common love-in-a-mist this spectacular violet-blue Spanish annual will be a revelation. Seek seed of a good form as there are dingy runts about. Once grown, never lost. H 50cm.

TREVOR SIMMS / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

Sarah Price

She won gold herself at this year's Chelsea Flower Show and is now wowing athletic medallists with her Olympic Park garden

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPH **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

There is something distinctively different about the gardens designed by Sarah Price. Airy and ethereal in planting, painterly in concept and with an impact that is quietly impressive, her work feels like it is part of something new.

At just 31, she has already created medal-winning exhibits at Hampton Court Palace and Chelsea Flower Show and, in collaboration with Professors Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough (see feature on page 66), she has designed half a mile of heightened naturalistic planting through which visitors will stroll at the Olympic Park.

But while some early achievers can be unbearably egotistical, Sarah seems almost to have stumbled backwards into the limelight. A shy child, she found refuge in the school art room. "I had a great teacher who encouraged me to draw," she says.

> *"I do feel quite strongly about how things should be done and I don't like to be limited by rules"*

Out of school, she helped her father on his allotment. "It was wild and messy but he produced really good veg. It was my way of having him to myself for a while."

Family holidays were spent in Wales at her grandparents' house in the Black Mountains. "I would just get up and go off exploring. It gave me space for my imagination. Maybe that is why I've always understood the power of landscape," she says.

She went on to earn a first class degree in Fine Art, but emerged from the education process with a sense of uncertainty. "I'd been working with light installations, which I loved, but it's hard to make a living doing that."

As an antidote, she spent a year working as an under-gardener at Hampton Court Palace, and another year studying garden design, but found neither experience wholly satisfying. So she took a job in an art shop, did odd bits of work for garden designers, and in 2006 entered an RHS competition to design a conceptual garden at Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

She won, and a request from the television shopping channel QVC for her to design a small garden at Chelsea followed, prompting press interest and an invitation to become involved with plans for the Olympic Park. Although she was the youngest and least experienced of the 100 or so contractors, Sarah's ideas soon got noticed. Which is not that surprising. She may be softly spoken and outwardly unassuming, but Sarah has an air of quiet authority, emanating from a core of self-belief.

"I do feel quite strongly about how things should be done and I don't like to be limited by rules," she says. "I feel the areas on the edge of a discipline are usually the most rich.

"That's why it was so wonderful working with Nigel and James on the Olympic site. We've got the same aesthetic – a passion for naturalistic planting – but they are from a scientific background and I am from an arts background. I learned so much on the job."

Currently, she's working on a range of projects, from gardens for the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester to a primary school wildlife garden. "What links them in my mind is my belief that landscape, architecture, art and community are all wrapped in together," she says. "Ecological elements should be integral to the process of good design."

It is possible to see her work as a progression from the wild garden aesthetic expounded by William Robinson over 100 years ago. She cites the *heem* parks (community botanical gardens) created in Holland last century as a big influence, in particular the work of Dutch naturalist and conservationist Jac P Thijsse, while Piet Oudolf is the contemporary designer whose name she mentions most often.

Yet when it comes to designing each new garden, Sarah has her own, very personal way of starting the process. "Drawing and sketching. For me there is a direct relationship between thought and hand," she says. The plants she then overlays on her beautifully impressionistic first drafts are those she has observed in the wild.

"One downside to how quickly my business has taken off is that I haven't had time to immerse myself in plants. A lot of my planting is directed by looking at where plants grow in the wild. Then I begin to layer them – exploiting the way a clear-stemmed plant can cause light to filter down, for example, or the structural complexity that comes when you combine spires, flatheads, fluff…"

Despite her success as a garden designer, she confesses to moments of anxiety about having given up fine art. After an hour in her studio, it is clear she has done no such thing. She is just exploring those rich areas at the edge of her discipline.

NEXT MONTH John Brookes, influential landscape designer and garden writer.

The garden with the *wow factor*

From aspidistras to zinnias, the sheer breadth of plants from around the world that thrive in Coleton Fishacre's colourful garden are guaranteed to take your breath away

WORDS **SUSAN ELDERKIN** PHOTOGRAPHS **CAROLE DRAKE**

In brief

NAME **Coleton Fishacre.**

WHAT **National Trust garden.**

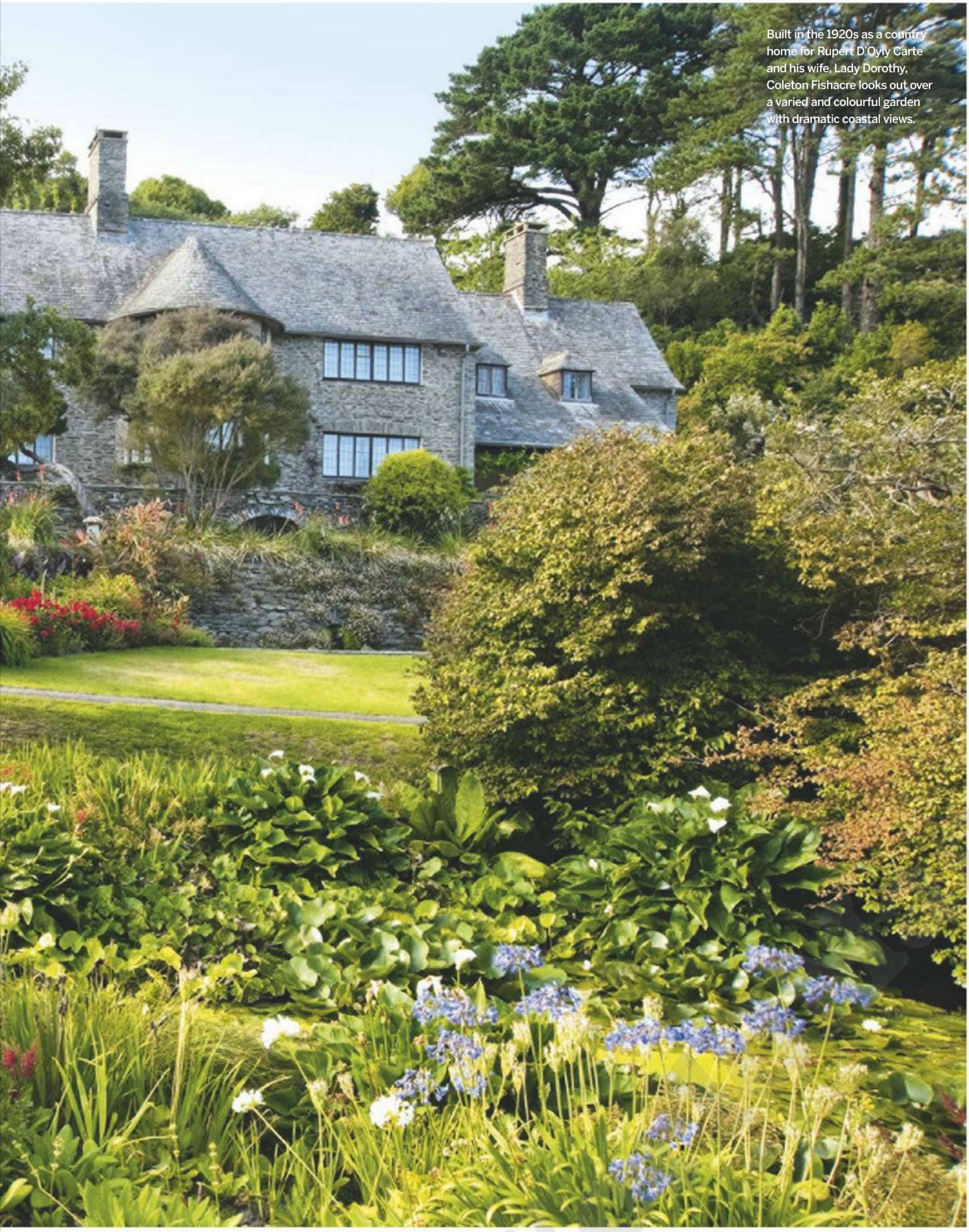
WHERE **A steep coastal valley near Kingswear in Devon.**

SIZE **30 acres.**

SOIL **Acidic overlying Dartmouth shale.**

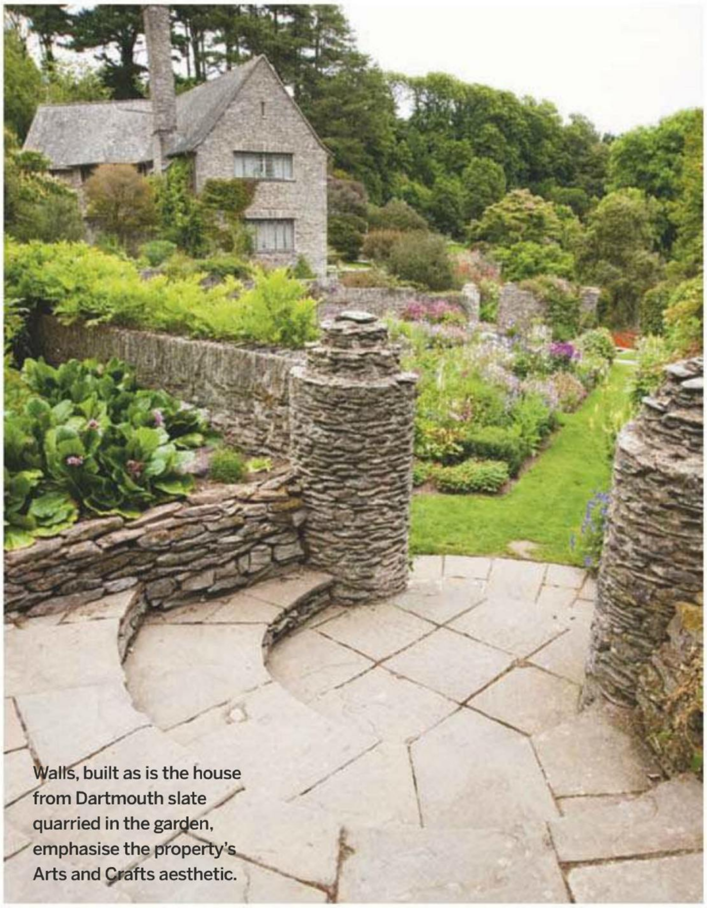
CONDITIONS **Mild and slightly drier than most of the South West as it is in the rain shadow of Dartmoor.**

SPECIAL FEATURES **Tender plants from the Mediterranean, South Africa and New Zealand in a beautifully preserved, tiered Arts and Crafts garden with enticing glimpses out to sea.**



Built in the 1920s as a country home for Rupert D'Oyly Carte and his wife, Lady Dorothy, Coleton Fishacre looks out over a varied and colourful garden with dramatic coastal views.

"Within a 15-minute walk you go from a windy wildflower meadow to a sheltered, semi-tropical jungle"


Walls, built as is the house from Dartmouth slate quarried in the garden, emphasise the property's Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

I've got my eye on that tree," says Martyn Pepper, squinting towards a glittering V of pale blue sea just visible from the terrace, but which is being eaten into by the crown of a cypress pine. He is the first to admit that pines are important at Coleton Fishacre, the National Trust garden in south Devon. Lining the ridges of this steep-sided Devonshire coomb, Monterey pines (*Pinus radiata*) protect the garden from the prevailing winds and allow such exotics as aspidistras to thrive in a moist, warm microclimate. But the snatched views of the sea are more important still.

In the early 1920s, Rupert D'Oyly Carte – inheritor of the eponymous opera company that brought Gilbert and Sullivan to fame and Savoy Group hotels – was sailing around the south coast with his wife Lady Dorothy looking for a site for their country retreat. They fell in love with this valley from the sea, and engaged the architect Oswald Milne, a protegé of Sir Edwin Lutyens, to design a house and surrounding gardens.

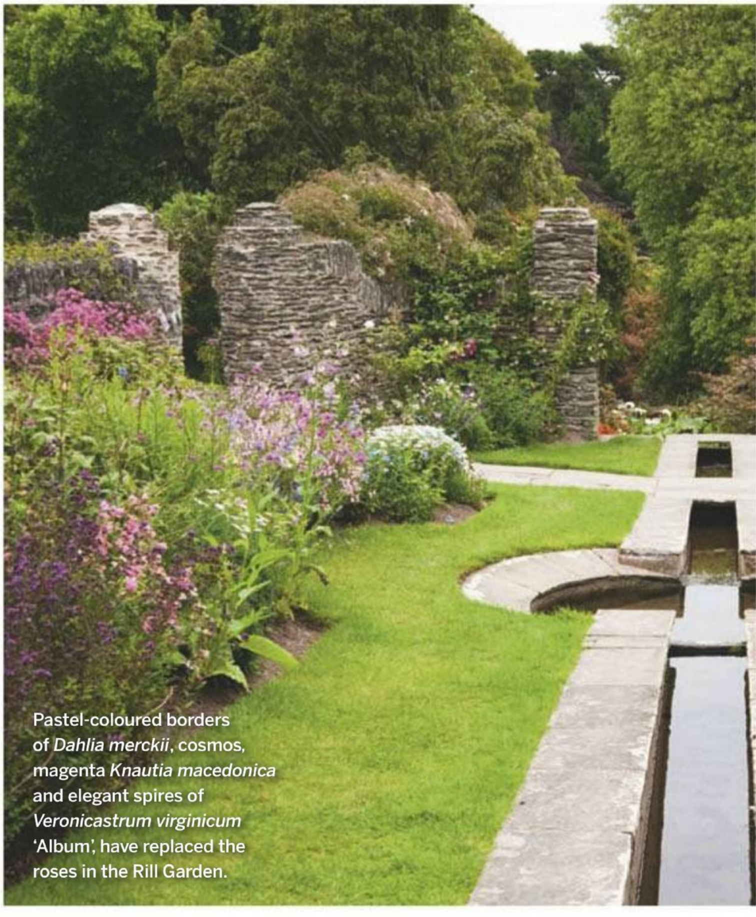
Arts and Crafts style

Using one person for both house and garden turned out to be an inspired decision. With the close attention to detail associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, Milne raised the house from the landscape: the blue and green-tinted Dartmouth shale that faces the house was quarried in the garden itself, and the coping stones above the windows match those that top the garden's walls as it clambers down several terraces towards Pudcombe Cove.

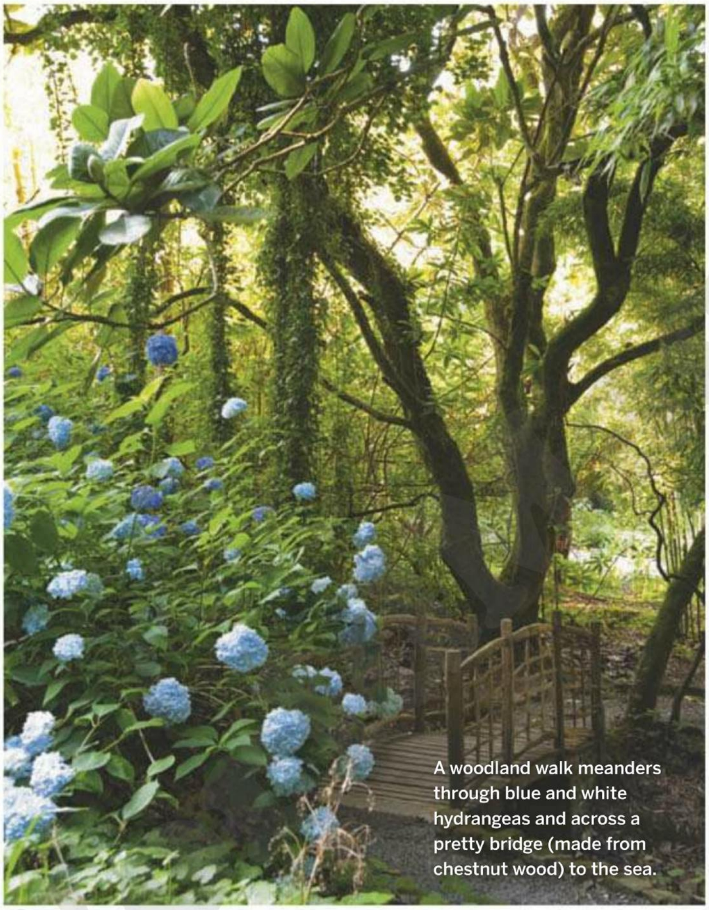
There's still plenty to remind visitors of the garden's Jazz Age heyday. A ship's bell hangs at the back of the house, once rung to summon bathers back up from the cove for dinner. And if you close your eyes you can almost hear the purr of a Bentley on the stone turning circle at the front of the house. The garden's signature trees and majestic rhododenrons, now in their full, mature glory, were planted by the D'Oyly Cartes themselves. As Martyn Pepper, now in charge of the two full-time gardeners and 25 volunteers who lovingly trim its edges, puts it, the garden has "that wow factor" that now draws some 80,000 visitors a year.

The wow factor comes partly from the exotics. From spring onwards, echiums, the Mexican lily *Beschorneria yuccoides*, *Puya berteroana* and *P. chilensis* throw up their spectacular giant spikes, which combine with aeoniums, agaves, *Grevillea*, *Telopea*, the stunning Chilean fire bush (*Embothrium coccineum*) and the bottlebrush shrub (*Callistemon*) to bring drama and colour to the beds. Angel's fishing rods (*Dierama pulcherrimum*) spill over from one terrace to the next at the back of the house, and the trunk of a New Zealand tea tree (*Leptospermum scoparium*), twisted like

▷


Pastel-coloured borders of *Dahlia merckii*, cosmos, magenta *Knautia macedonica* and elegant spires of *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Album', have replaced the roses in the Rill Garden.

In the south-facing 'hot' bed orange crocosmias cavort in high summer with red dahlias and gladiolus.



A woodland walk meanders through blue and white hydrangeas and across a pretty bridge (made from chestnut wood) to the sea.

The garden's mellow microclimate allows exotic yuccas, bromeliads, echiums, euphorbias, cacti, fascicularias and Chilean myrtle (*Luma apiculata*) to grow outside.

▷ rope, leans dramatically back towards the house as if craving to join in the party. Since the National Trust took over the property in 1982, the gardeners have tried to maintain a balance between staying true to the original planting, and planting what works best. "You can't just replicate as things don't stay the same," says Martyn. "Trees grow, and there's shade where there didn't used to be."

Replacing the roses

Martyn's predecessor Andrew McCoryn was responsible for the inspired new planting in the Rill Garden. Overlooked by Lady Dorothy's bedroom window and given a strong formal note by the canalised stream that runs through it, the beds here once contained roses, which Lady Dorothy loved. "But roses don't grow well year after year in the same ground," points out Martyn. Knowing she loved pastels, Andrew opted for a high-summer garden with a mixture of hardy (delphiniums, asters) and half-hardy perennials (marguerites, tender salvias, penstemons) and annuals (cosmos, *Nicotiana mutabilis*) that build in colour as the season goes on. "We added a couple of David Austin roses ['Gertrude Jekyll' and 'Winchester Cathedral'] to keep the rose link and add scent."

But the wow factor also comes from the garden's variety. Within a 15-minute walk, you go from formal beds with flowering Japanese cherries (*Prunus* 'Shogetsu') to Mediterranean succulents, and from a windy wildflower meadow to a sheltered, semi-tropical jungle. It's an invigorating medley. "Where else do you find aspidistras growing outside?" asks Martyn, who often finds himself referring to a well-thumbed Phillips and Rix *Guide to Conservatory & Indoor Plants* on his coffee breaks. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Coleton Fishacre, Brownstone Road, Kingswear, Devon TQ6 0EQ.
TEL 01803 842382.
WEBSITE www.nationaltrust.org.uk
OPEN March to December.

8 of Martyn's favourite plants in July and August

1 ***Salvias***
"They're free and long-flowering and come in everything from pink and white to red and mauve and blue." Favourites are *Salvia leucantha* with its mauve flower and the light blue *S. patens* 'Cambridge Blue', and these *S.* × *jamensis* 'Hot Lips'.

2 ***Dahlia merckii***
"A lovely pale pink. We use this in the Rill Garden. It's tall and free-flowering and it blends nicely with other plants as it has a loose effect. Another favourite is *Dahlia* 'Bednall Beauty', which we use in the hot bed – it's low so it's useful for the front."

3 ***Watsonias* (bugle lily)**
"There are several of these striking South African plants in the garden. I like the salmon pink colours of the Tresco hybrids and *W.* 'Stanford Scarlet'."

4 ***Dierama* (angel's fishing rod)**
"These have become a real fixture as they hate being moved. They're very graceful and spill out over the border. But they have a short flowering season [about three weeks in July/August] so five years ago we took every third one out and replaced it with a red hot poker to reinforce the colour in that bed."

5 ***Kniphofia***
"We use red hot pokers in the sub-tropical border both for colour and impact. We use a lot of different species and cultivars as some flower early and some late."

6 ***Callistemon citrinus* 'Splendens' (the Australian bottlebrush)**
"We use this in the lower terrace for its good hot colour and lovely spikey effect."

7 ***Lobelia tupa***
"This perennial grows three or four foot so it's great for hot borders and drama. Once it flowers it goes on into September."

8 ***Zinnias***
"I read that the pattern on fabric used at the Savoy Theatre [one-time home to the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company] was inspired by zinnias, and I decided to pick up on it. They take their time to open and when they do, they're lovely and bright."

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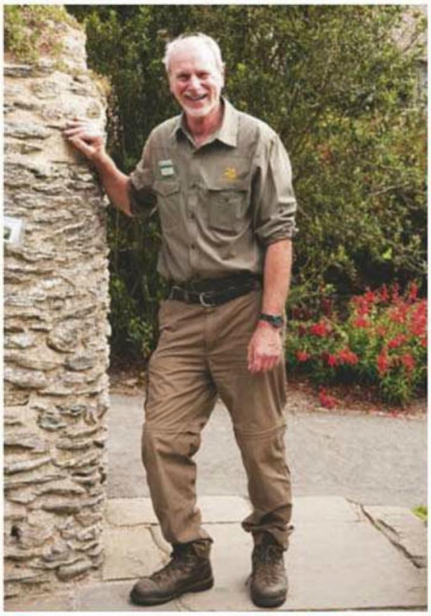

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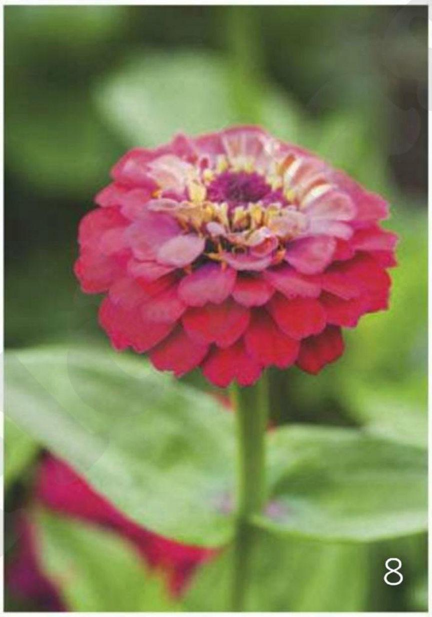

8

4 CAROLE DRAKE/ GAPPHOTOS

The trouble with gardening magazines," says Jo Hartgill darkly, "is that they give people ideas."

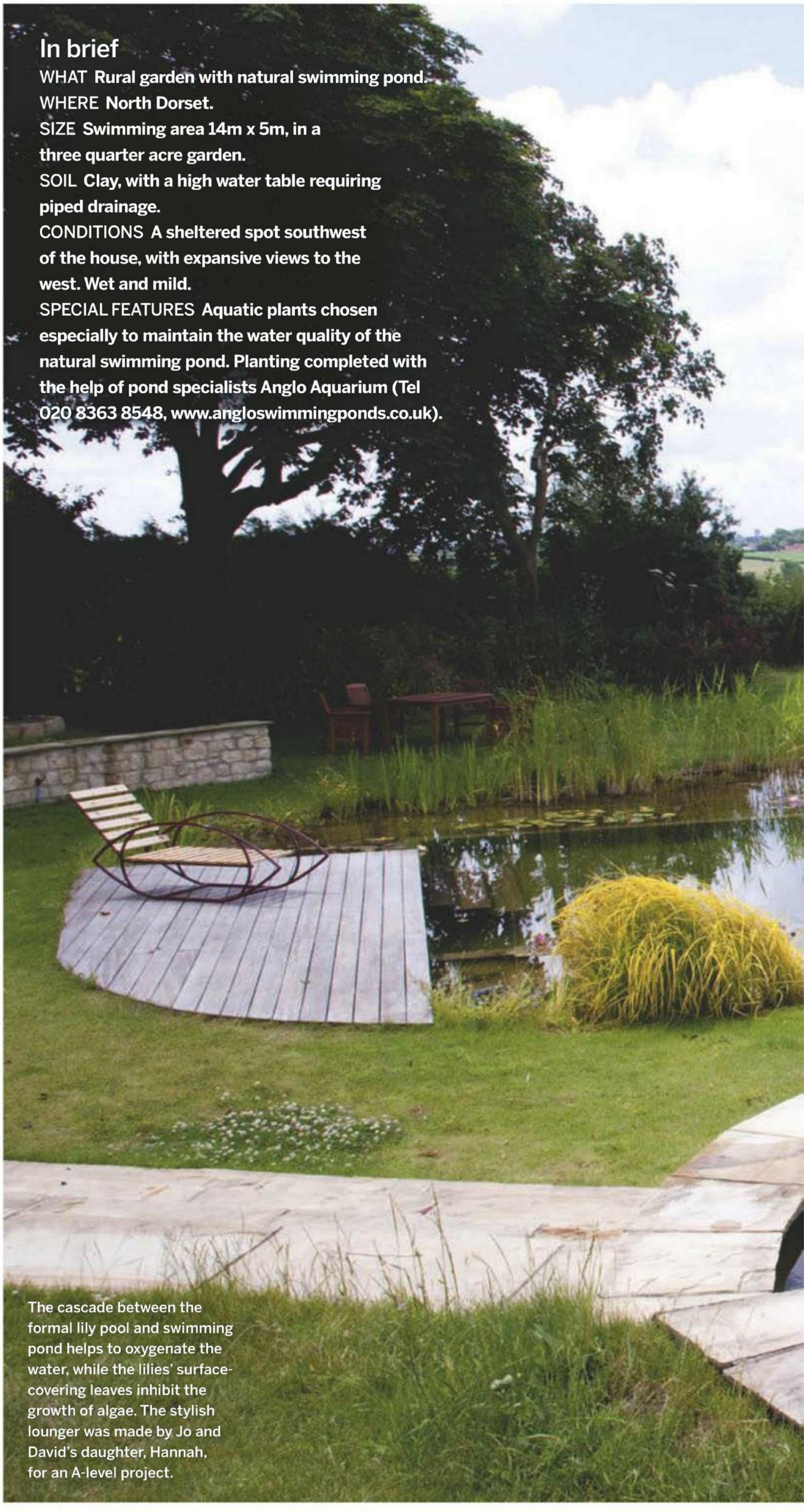
It was in a report of the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 2003 that Jo first saw a natural swimming pond. Long popular in Germany and Austria, this eco-friendly alternative to the traditional blue swimming pool had recently made its first appearance in Britain, and attracted much attention at the show. Jo cut out the picture, and sent it to her husband, David, an engineer, who was abroad at the time. He had always wanted a swimming pool, she teased him, so here was how to do it – with fresh, chlorine-free water, fringed with flowers and dancing with dragonflies. It was meant as a joke – but the moment David came home, he got busy with a JCB.

"I was building a ha-ha to link the garden and the field," explains David, "and needed some soil. So I made a guess as to where the pond was going to be and started digging. There was no going back."

Then, after leaving a crater in the garden, David was off again. At that point, Jo recalls, it was the middle of winter, the garden looked like the Somme, and she heartily wished she had never clapped eyes on a swimming pond.

Diving to the rescue

So it remained, until the cavalry arrived in the shape of eco-landscape designer Michael Littlewood. Michael had travelled to Austria to study swimming ponds in the late 1990s, and has been championing them ever since. By Easter, the pond was complete, and Michael had helped Jo and David to redesign the major part of the garden. By summer, the months of mud were forgotten, and the family were using the pond daily. Jo was astonished at how quickly it seemed to settle into the landscape, and how soon the wildlife ▷



In brief

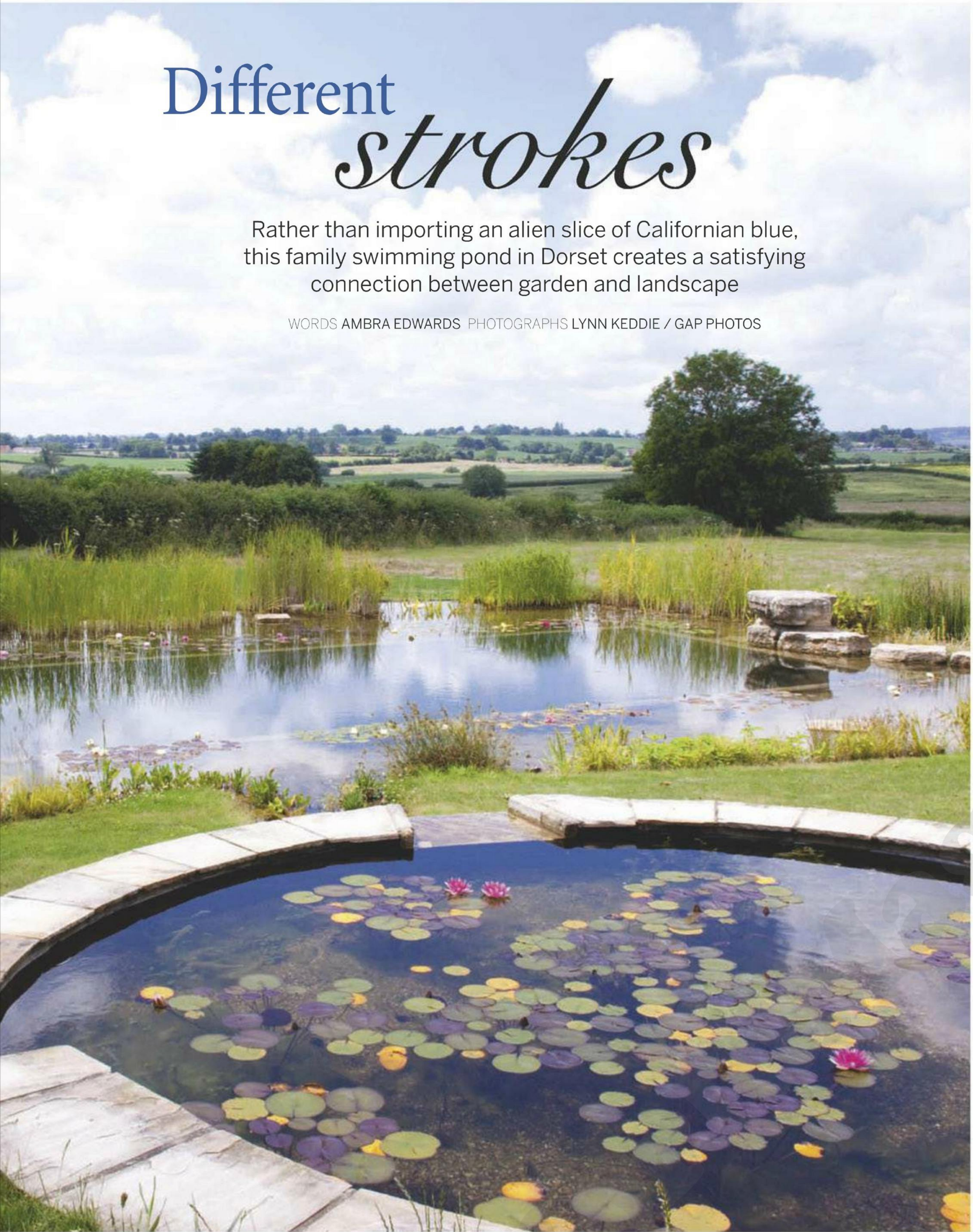
WHAT **Rural garden with natural swimming pond.**
WHERE **North Dorset.**
SIZE **Swimming area 14m x 5m, in a three quarter acre garden.**
SOIL **Clay, with a high water table requiring piped drainage.**
CONDITIONS **A sheltered spot southwest of the house, with expansive views to the west. Wet and mild.**
SPECIAL FEATURES **Aquatic plants chosen especially to maintain the water quality of the natural swimming pond. Planting completed with the help of pond specialists Anglo Aquarium (Tel 020 8363 8548, www.angloswimmingponds.co.uk).**

The cascade between the formal lily pool and swimming pond helps to oxygenate the water, while the lilies' surface-covering leaves inhibit the growth of algae. The stylish lounger was made by Jo and David's daughter, Hannah, for an A-level project.

Different *strokes*

Rather than importing an alien slice of Californian blue, this family swimming pond in Dorset creates a satisfying connection between garden and landscape

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS



Large rocks placed at the end of the pond create an alternative diving board popular with all the family.

▷ made it their own. Frogs, newts and dragonflies arrived within weeks; while the dusk brought swallows and bats darting and diving over the water.

It is as if a little piece of the nearby River Stour has somehow slipped unobtrusively uphill. Swimming in the pool, with no fence between lawn and meadow, gives an uninterrupted view over the landscape, never lovelier than when the sun is setting. Then, muses Jo, it feels as if you are swimming off into the immensity of the sky. “Instead of imposing something on the landscape, you feel you are part of it,” says David. His sense of connection with this landscape is profound: there have been Hartgills in the area for 900 years.

The pool has proved a success on many levels – a huge hit with the children, a popular place for parties, a focal point for the garden, and instant therapy after a busy working day. “I like the swimming bit,” says Jo. “And floating among the lilies like the Lady of Shalott, and David has hours of fun pootling around and weeding it.”

“The best thing about the pond,” says David, “is it’s enjoyable in every season. In summer we swim, in winter we skate, and in spring and autumn we just enjoy looking at it.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Michael Littlewood introduced swimming ponds to Britain in 2000, and has written a comprehensive guide to the subject: *Natural Swimming Pools: a Guide for Building* (AgriMedia, £24.95 ISBN 978-3-86037-350-7)

The mechanics of building a pond

Natural swimming ponds imitate the eco-system of a healthy pond to stay clean. The pond, which needs a surface area of at least 50 square metres, consists of a swimming area, at least 2m deep, waterproofed by a rubber liner with a geotextile underliner. This is serviced by shallow ‘regeneration zone’, where plants in a bed of gravel, act as a filter and create a habitat for the micro-organisms that break down potential pollutants. The two areas are separated by a wall, which ends about 20cm below the surface of the water. A pump keeps the water circulating between the two zones so that the plants can do their work, and moves warm water from the shallow zone into the swimming pond.

While construction costs are similar to a conventional swimming pool, maintenance is much cheaper and simpler. The plants are left to stand until they begin to get mushy, then cut back in the autumn. After a few years, vigorous plants such as rushes and flag iris will need thinning out, while the gravel may need refreshing in five to seven years. David hoovers the bottom of the pond twice a year to remove any debris, and regularly tweaks out any blanketweed – a task he regards as therapeutic.

9 plants for your pond

SHALLOW WATER: (50-100cm)

1 ***Thalia dealbata***
Tall and graceful foliage plant providing seclusion for swimmers, and cover for resident wildlife. Height (H) 150cm.

2 ***Iris versicolor* (blue flag)**
The American wild blue iris is unsurpassed for beauty and delicacy. H 60cm.

3 ***Typha minima* (dwarf reedmace)**
All the charm of the wild bulrush but without its bullying habits. An excellent cleanser and a valuable late food plant for migrating swallows. H 30-45cm.

MID DEPTH: (1-3m)

4 ***Sagittaria latifolia* (arrowhead)**
Indestructible deciduous perennial with distinctive arrow-shaped leaves and white three-petalled flowers in summer. H 100cm.

5 ***Butomus umbellatus* (flowering rush)**
One of our prettiest natives, bearing airy heads of delicate, rose-pink flowers in July and August. Both tubers and seeds are edible. H 120cm.

6 ***Calla palustris* (bog arum)**
White, arum-like spathes appear in spring followed by clusters of red or orange berries. H 25cm.

DEEP WATER: (3-5m)

7 ***Aponogeton distachyos* (water hawthorn)**
Semi-evergreen perennial with long, pointed, floating leaves, bearing masses of small, fragrant white flowers, held 10cm above the water surface in spring.

8 ***Nymphaea* (water lilies)**
Michael aims to cover at least a third of the regeneration zone with floating plants, principally water lilies. Their big, plate-like leaves also disguise the line of the wall. *Nymphaea* ‘Escarboucle’ will spread up to 1.5m across, but is a reliable performer that stays open longer than most.

9 ***Orontium aquaticum* (golden club)**
Lance shaped blue-green leaves make upright cups on the water, bearing up white poker flowers with glowing golden tips in mid-summer. H 50cm (above water).

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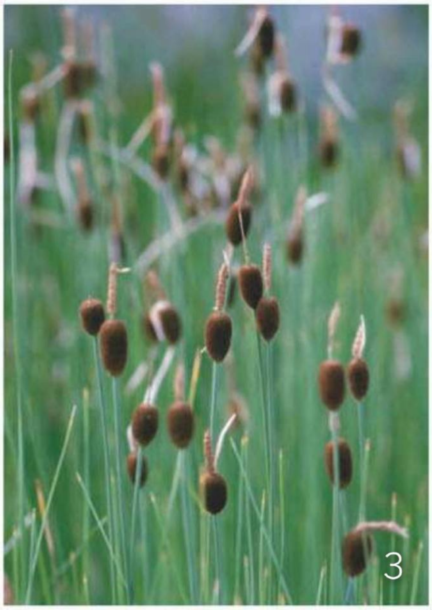
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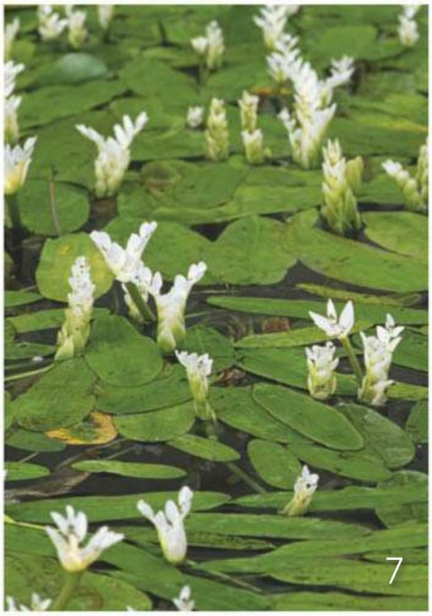
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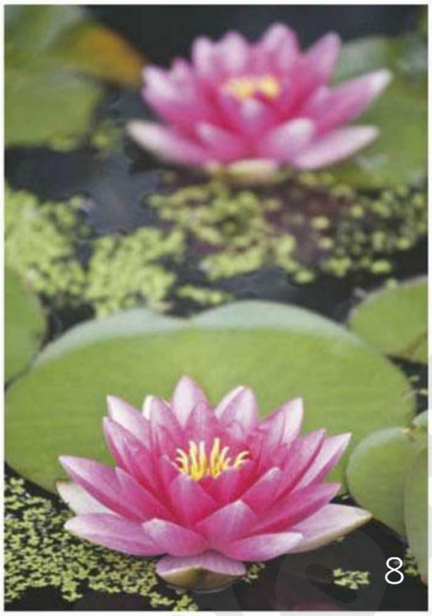
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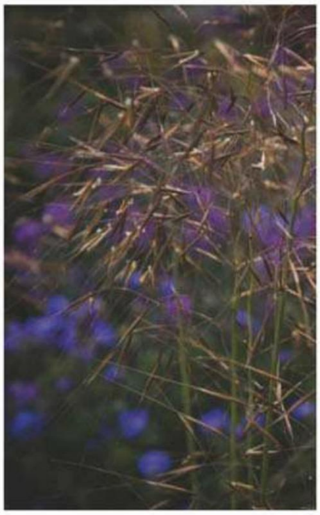
Education Guide

Your guide to the best courses available in garden design and horticulture



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Anoushka Feiler - Winner of Best in Show, Gold and People's Choice Awards at Hampton Court Flower Show 2012

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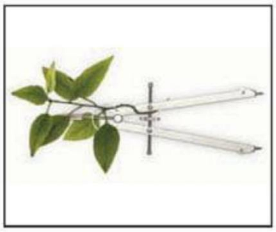

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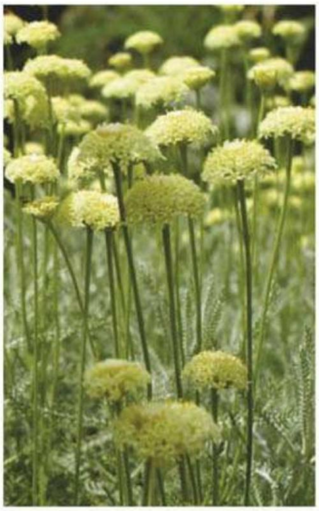

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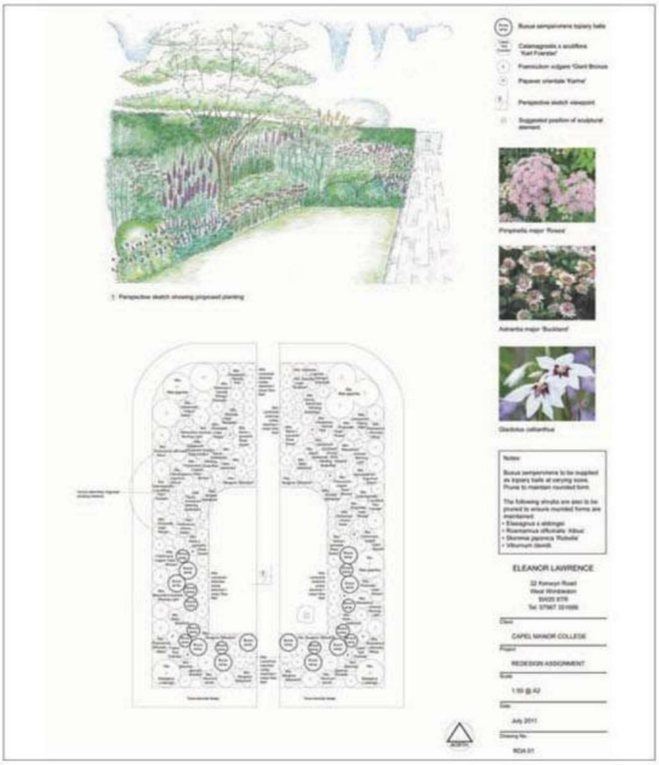

Capel Manor College

31 year-old senior landscape architect, Eleanor Lawrence (above), graduated with a Masters degree in Landscape architecture, yet the task of producing planting plans would fill her with dread. Despite knowing more than 300 plants her mind would go blank, and knowing she couldn't avoid planting plans the rest of her career embarked on a part-time garden and planting design course at Capel Manor.

"I soon realised I actually needed to develop the skill to design whole spaces with plants. Already at the design-concept stage I wanted to be able to think confidently in terms of specific plants – for their architectural, textural and tonal qualities, and their capacity to reflect and enhance the built environment. Like most people, having seen poorly planted public spaces I began to question the plant knowledge of landscape architects. My expert tutors at Capel Manor taught me to treat plants as an integral part of the overall design process, something which should be taught to all students of landscape design, yet planting design has become increasingly marginalised to just a few units within degree courses. It is one of the beauties of my profession, to use plants to inform and inspire designs. The Capel Manor course has improved my knowledge hugely."

Former special nurse, Joanne Wilson, swapped a 30 year nursing career for designing people's gardens, in Cornwall, where she relocated from her home in north London. Graduating three years ago from Capel Manor College with a level 3 diploma in garden design, she has since been running her own design practise and was recently invited to build a competition garden (bottom right), 'Best of British', for an Arts and Crafts Garden Festival, at Coombe Trenchard, in Devon, inspired by Gertrude Jekyll and incorporating Jubilee themed colours.

"Once my children had left home and having come out of a long marriage, it was time to resurrect my dreams and do something new with my life. I've always loved gardening, architecture and interior design. I'm a creative person and very visual and the course at Capel Manor gave me an opportunity to combine these passions. I met many like minded people who had a passion for plants and design."

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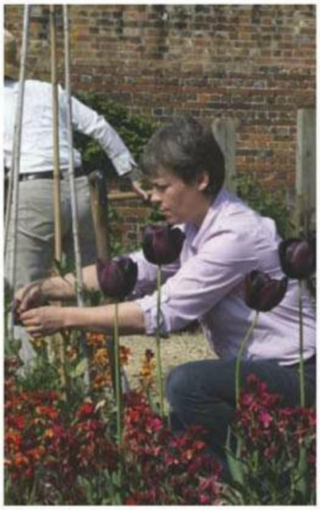

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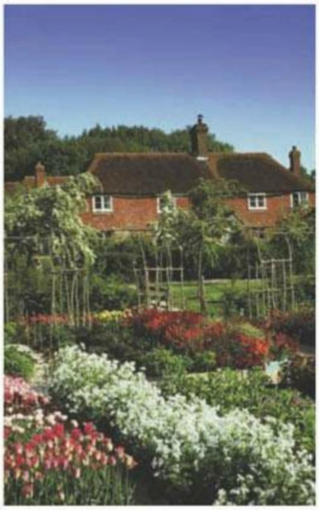
the cotswold gardening school

> *"Seeing something that started as an idea, a sketch in a notebook become something that you can smell, taste, touch, walk around or simply stand in is really very rewarding.... especially if the client is happy too."*
>
> **Adam Shepherd**, The Landscape Architect

Image credit Helen Gray



Sarah Raven's Garden and Cookery School

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Sarah Raven

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Latest design news, design ideas

Matthew Hayes's striking *Residue* panels are on view at the British Glass Biennale, part of the International Festival of Glass featured on page 100.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF GLASS

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News

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

GARDEN DEVELOPMENT

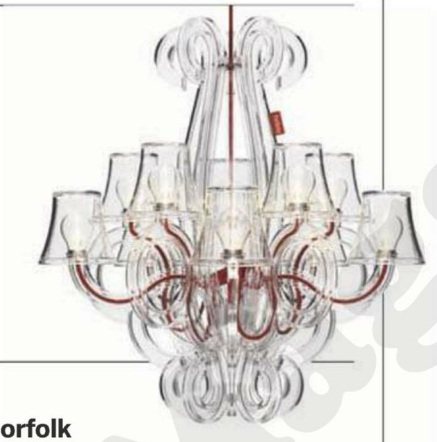
CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

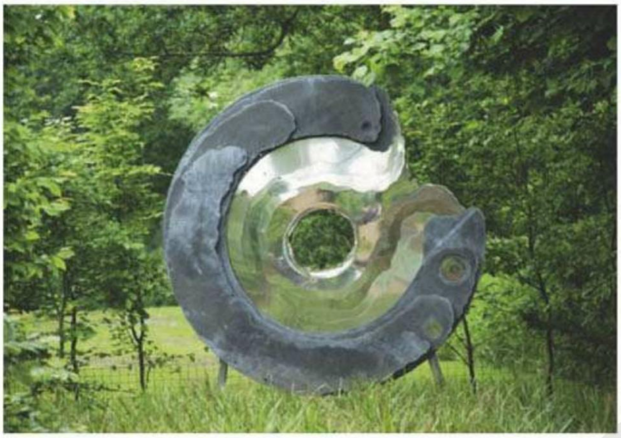
An under-used part of the Chelsea Physic Garden, next to London's Embankment, has been cleared and re-designed to create two gardens – one to showcase useful plants, the other edible plants. Designed by head gardener Nick Bailey, the Garden of Useful Plants leads from the Perfume Theatre, where visitors can sit surrounded by the scents of species used to make fragrances and cosmetics, through a series of raised beds to a circular bee-forage bed. The Garden of Edible Plants is enclosed by an embryonic forest garden on one side, and a line of young vines that trace the history of viticulture on the other. Central Vitamin Beds make a fascinating display of plants that provide five essential vitamins: A, B, C, E and K.

GARDEN GLAMOUR

Dutch design company DeMakersVan is bringing Baroque-style sophistication to alfresco dining with its RockCoco chandelier for design brand Fatboy. Made from fire-retardant polycarbonate, it has a output of up to 200 lumens and comes with 7m of cable.

RockCoco chandelier, height 68cm, width 62cm and depth 62cm, costs £439. Available from Barbed, 020 8878 1994, www.barbedltd.co.uk





CHARLIE HOPKINSON, BARBED, JUNGLE.FR

NEW GARDEN

Waveline Garden, Norfolk

A swirling stainless steel sculpture, *The Nest* by Miles Halpin, with an outer rim of grey galvanised steel and set within two rows of newly planted hornbeams marks one end of the Waveline Garden at Pensthorpe in Norfolk. This new garden, designed by head gardener Imogen Checketts, forms a circular route that leads up from the older Wave Garden, along a 100m stretch of former railway line. The track, which offers superb views of the surrounding lakes and across to the Piet Oudolf-designed Millennium Garden, is punctuated with a series of seating bays, some framed by yew hedging, with bespoke green oak benches by Chris Nangle. A grove of sorbus marks the half-way point, and banks of wild flowers and camassias have been planted on either side of the track.

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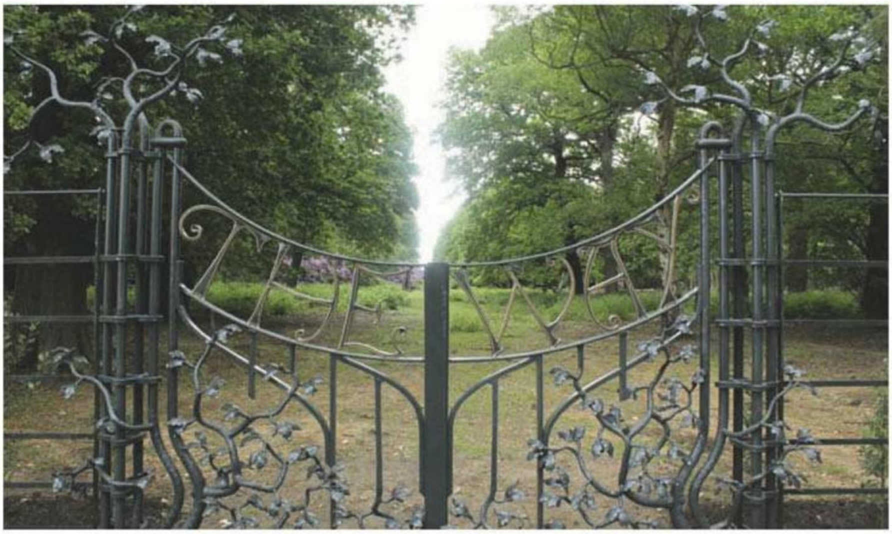
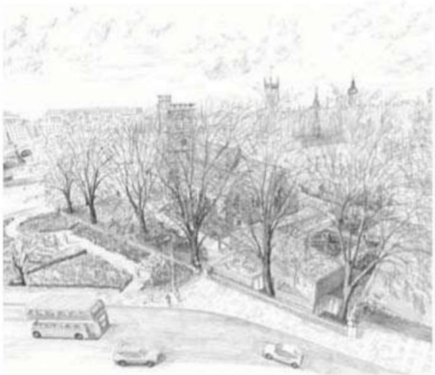


DESIGN ELEMENTS

Blacksmith leads the way with prize-winning design

Young blacksmith Joshua De Lisle, whose work can be seen at his workshop at Moors Meadow garden in Collington, Herefordshire, has won a competition to design new gates for St Paul's Vista, which offers views of St Paul's cathedral from King Henry's Mound in London's Richmond Park. The wrought-iron design was inspired by the shape of the park's English oak trees, which form an avenue that leads the eye to the distant cathedral. The gates are dedicated to the late ecologist Teddy Goldsmith, who founded *The Ecologist* magazine, and they incorporate the title of his book *The Way*.



MUSEUM

Development funding for museum

Britain's only museum dedicated to gardening and garden design has been awarded £273,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to bring its restoration plans a step closer. The Garden Museum wants to expand its current site in a south London church and has planned a cloister-style building wrapped around a knot garden, designed by Lady Salisbury, which will house a larger café and education centre. A garden design archive will also be located inside the museum.

EXHIBITIONS

Glass galore

You'll find plenty of inspiration for using glass in a sculptural way in the garden at the International Festival of Glass (www.ifg.org.uk), which takes place every two years in and around Stourbridge in the West Midlands. At Bodenham Arboretum the Glass Afloat exhibition (1-27 August) explores the reflective quality of glass, and includes works such as Keith Brocklehurst's *Titania's Ring*, a collection of mirrored globes that float on the three-acre lake. Meanwhile at the British Glass Biennale exhibition at Ruskin Glass Centre in Stourbridge, several glass pieces designed to be illuminated at night, including Matthew Hayes *Residue* panels (pictured), will be on show from 24 August to 15 September.

Notebook

- **Book now for a tour of gardens in Provence –** including several designed by Nicole de Vésian – led by Louisa Jones. The trip includes a visit to the Mediterranean plants nursery of Pierre and Pia Braun and a cooking lesson in the kitchens of the Mirande hotel in Avignon. 7-12 October. More details on www.louisajones.fr
- **Majestic Trees, near St Albans in Herts**, has opened a new courtyard garden, designed by Capel Manor student Helen Thomas. The design includes mature trees, specialist lighting and oak fencing.
- **Annie Guilfoyle's small garden course** on 29 September is just one of a series of short design courses coming up at West Dean College, West Sussex. Tel 01243 811301, www.westdean.org.uk
- **Richard Deverell, will take up the job of director** of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in mid September following a 19-year career at the BBC. A former trustee of the gardens, Richard replaces Professor Steve Hopper who returns to Australia to become Professor of Biodiversity at the University of Western Australia, Perth.
- **Winner of the 2011 GARDENS ILLUSTRATED** Student of the Year award Leonie Cornelius, from KLC School of Design, has won a gold and best in category at the 2012 Bloom in the Park in Dublin. Leonie's prize-winning garden was designed on a €5,500 budget for the Irish RTÉ TV programme *Super Garden*.

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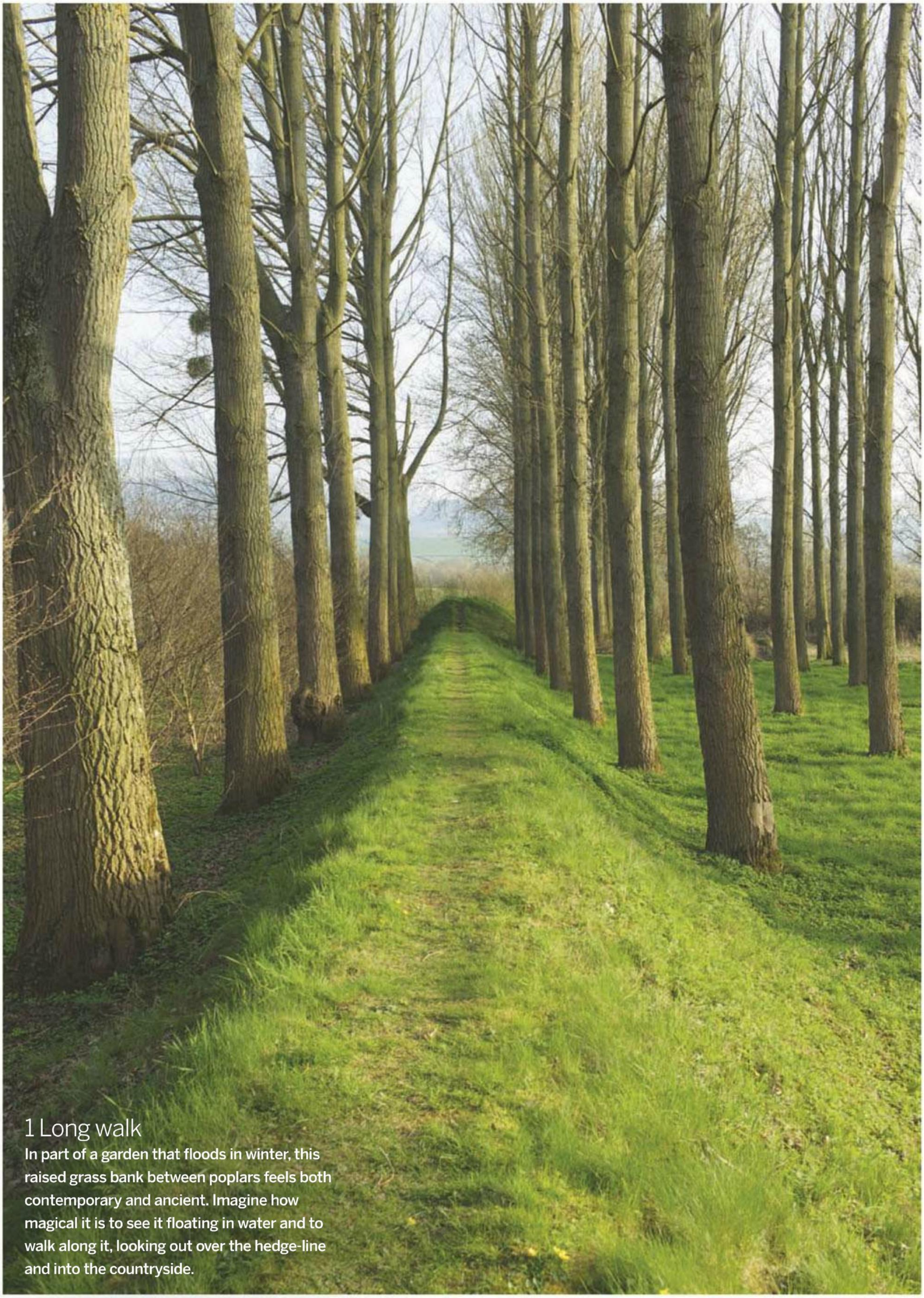


1 Long walk

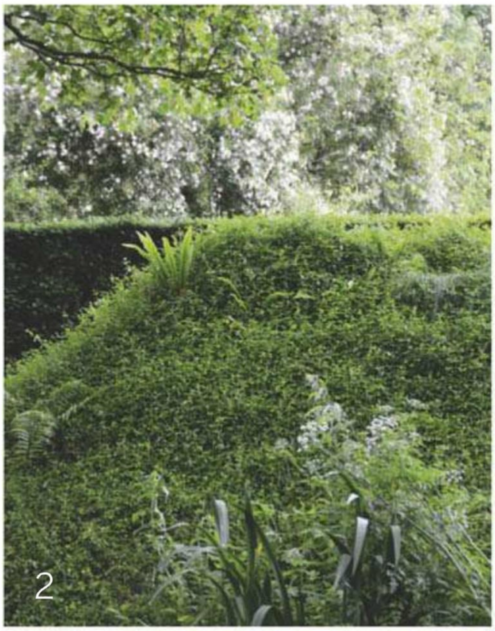
In part of a garden that floods in winter, this raised grass bank between poplars feels both contemporary and ancient. Imagine how magical it is to see it floating in water and to walk along it, looking out over the hedge-line and into the countryside.

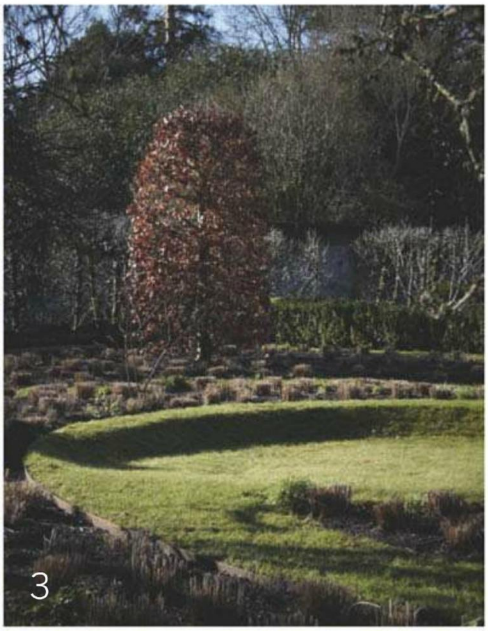
Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire

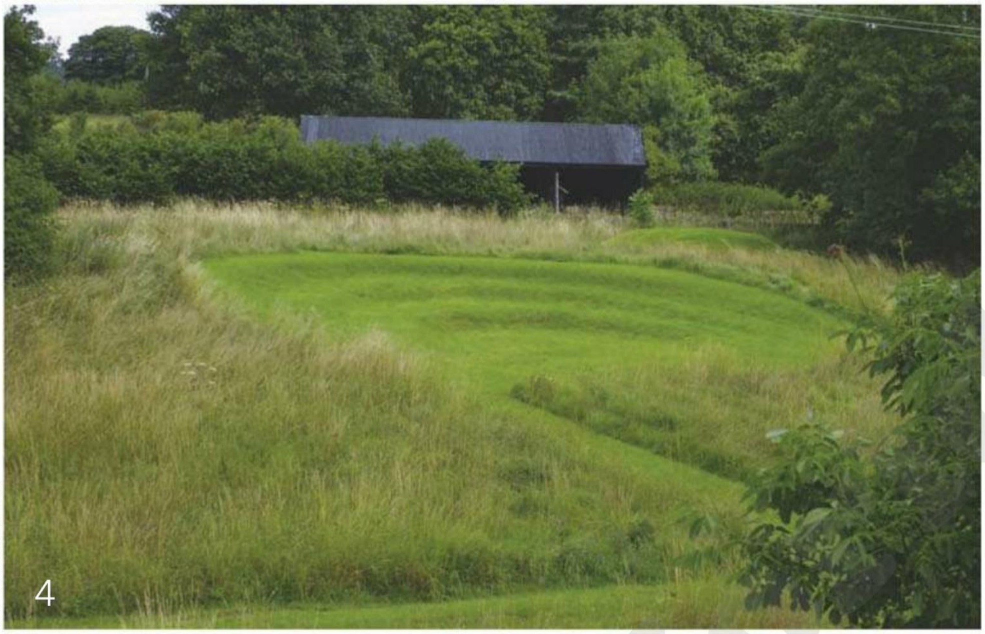
Earthworks

These simple forms carved out of the land bring an air of mystery and enchantment to gardens

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAM COLLINSON







3 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

2 Earth and water

In the same garden shown opposite, a turf mound covered in white periwinkle is positioned at the edge of a pond. When in flower, the perfect cone shape of the mound, dressed in white, is reflected, along with the trees, in the water.

3 Sunken lawn

A sunken lawn has been dug out to create a secluded sitting space within a larger garden. Approached by two spiralling paths and with a copper-beech topiary standing sentinel, the sense is of a space that is protected and intimate, with an almost spiritual atmosphere.

4 Grass amphitheatre

In this Derbyshire garden we have made a simple grass amphitheatre in the heart of a wildflower meadow. There are beautiful views out and it is a place to sit and watch the sun go down. Because it is hidden by the approach, there is the added element of surprise.

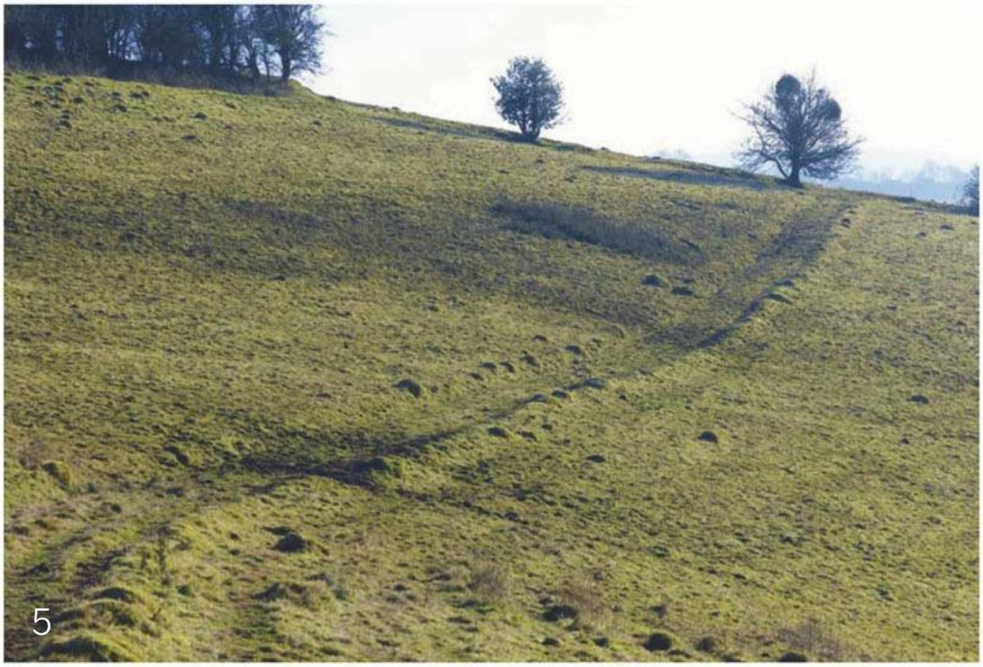
WorldMags

5 Drovers' way

This is the droveway that goes through the field by my house. It is a track that has been carved into the landscape to take a hay-cart up and down. Like ridge and furrow, these examples of man's imprint on the landscape are subtle, but beautiful.

6 Ancient earthworks

Knowlton Church and Earthworks (www.english-heritage.org.uk) is a Bronze Age site in Dorset. The ruins of a 14th-century church lie at the centre of a complex of pagan earthworks, and the atmosphere is spine-tingling. An ancient place like this, grazed by sheep and covered in wildflowers is really inspirational.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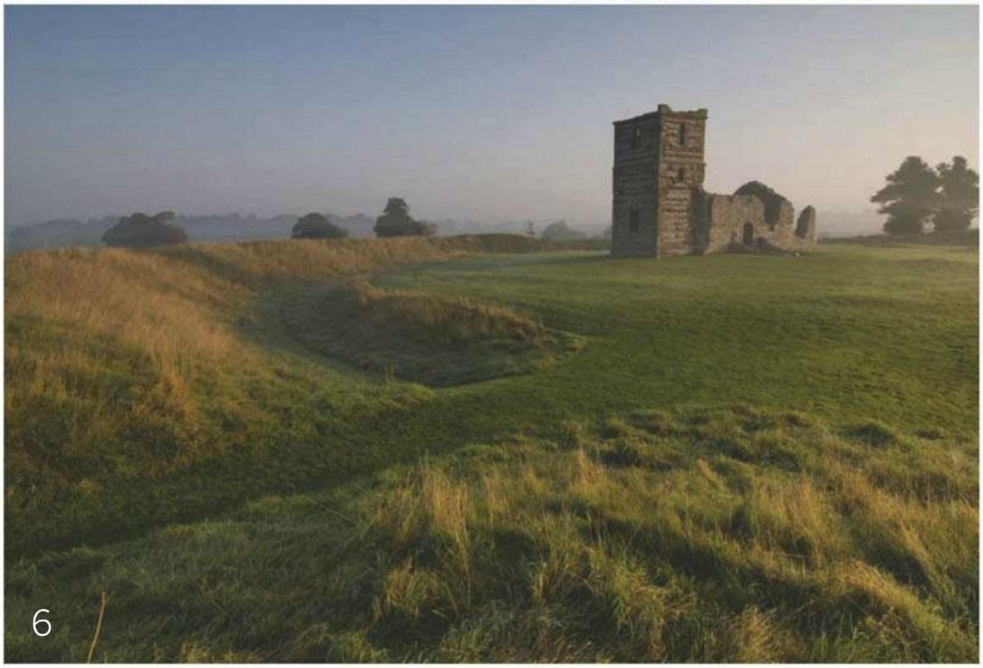
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6 CLIFTON BEARD

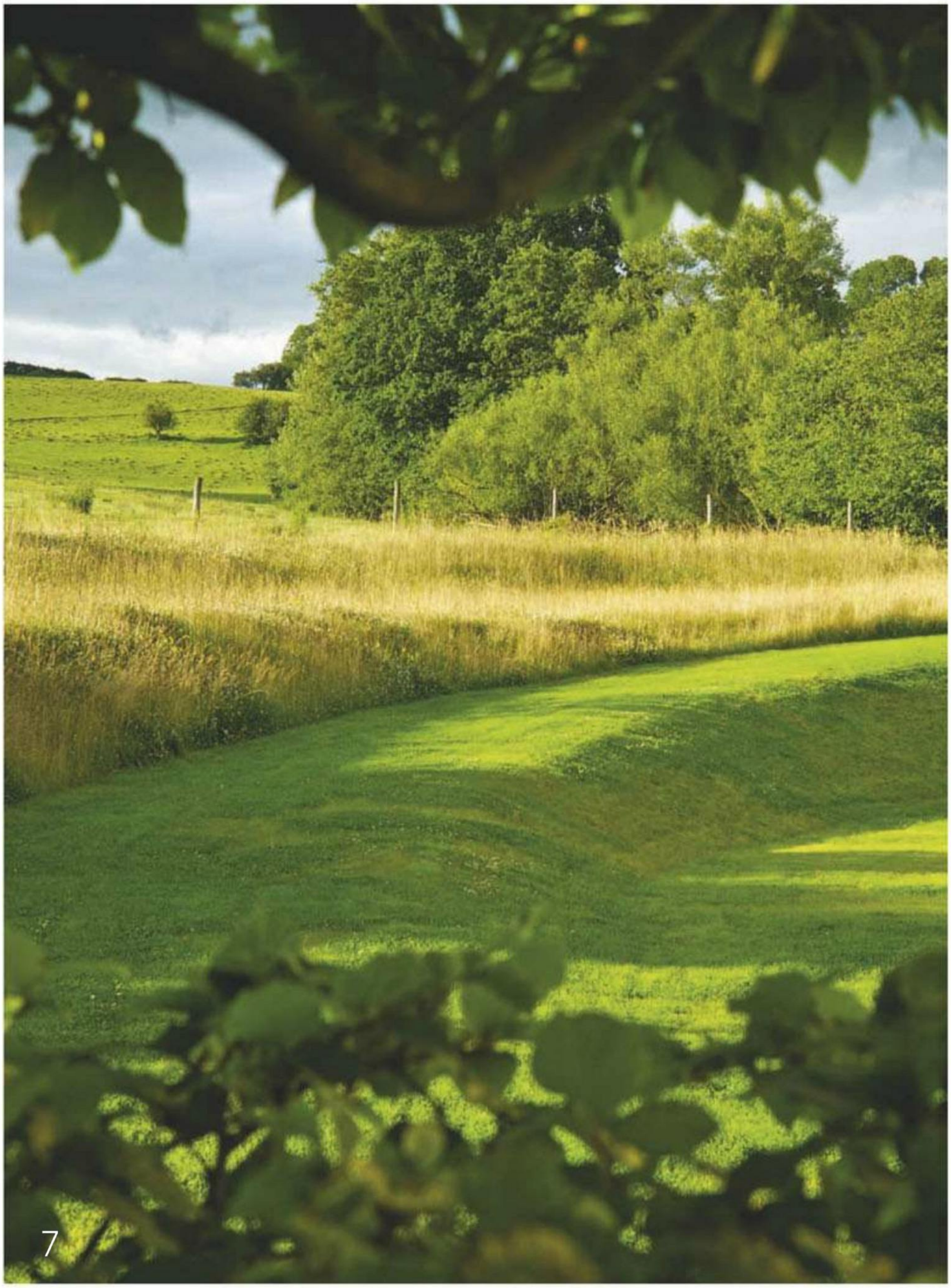
Whenever we sculpt forms from the land, we're using earth and grass as building blocks to create something functional – it is a practice that predates recorded history and one deeply ingrained in us.

Many of the ancient marks that are imprinted on our landscape have ceremonial or religious origins, such as a track made to get people across wet ground to a pagan altar or sacrificial site. While other early earthworks, such as the old droveways carved into the landscape, arose from the need to walk or to wheel a cart up a slope in the most efficient way.

Others may have arisen through agricultural or other imperative, perhaps a causeway constructed to get people to dry land above the tideline or a flooded plain. The result is a pattern in the landscape, formed through the necessity of a desire. Land art has to be purposeful as well as decorative.

But whatever form these man-made marks take – whether it be grass amphitheatre, turf maze or raised mound – our response to them is instinctive. It is almost as though they have become embedded in our psyche.

Over time we have adapted them. We have taken them over and turned them into green



7 Changing levels

The earthworks in my garden make a visual link with the droveway beyond, and serve the practical function of dealing with level changes. The cut grass bank acts as a ramp taking you from house to field level, and long grass blurs the boundary between field and garden.

sculptures, but they continue to exert a strong sense of magic and mystery.

Large-scale land art, or smaller-scale land sculpture, is always covered in grass, sometimes long, sometimes short. Landforms, such as the turf mounds that featured in many early Tudor and Renaissance gardens, would probably have evolved from the old motte and bailey settlements, an example of the way a defensive earthwork was scaled down in more peaceful times, to become an element in the design of the garden. From the vantage point of the mound, you could survey your land, admire the ground pattern of the garden and also look out on to what was happening in the wider landscape.

Earthworks have continued to fascinate garden-makers, with magnificent examples, such as Charles Bridgeman's classical turf amphitheatre at Claremont Landscape Garden. They are also a wonderful way to introduce raised walkways and soft level changes. By moving earth around and sculpting it you create your own miniature landscape, making garden forms with a year-round presence that can cast wonderful shadows and add a subtle element of enchantment.

NEXT MONTH Self-seeders

Stockists

Earthworks need to be turfed rather than seeded as quickly as possible to hold the shape formed by the soil. You could cover it with wild flower turf, leaving it soft and long in the summer and cutting back for a sharper look in the autumn and winter. **www.wildflowerturf.co.uk**

Using a plant like ***Vinca minor* f. *alba***, the white lesser periwinkle, means you don't need to mow it, Crocus has ***Vinca minor* f. *alba* 'Gertrude Jekyll'**, which it supplies by mail order. **www.crocus.co.uk**

I can cut my earth banks with the mower, but if you want to cut banks that are any steeper, using a grass trimmer is the easiest method. You need to find one that is suitable for the scale of your banks, and that you can handle easily. **Stihl** is a reliable make and has a huge range. A local stockist should be able to help you decide on the right model for you. **www.stihl.co.uk/dealer-locator.aspx**

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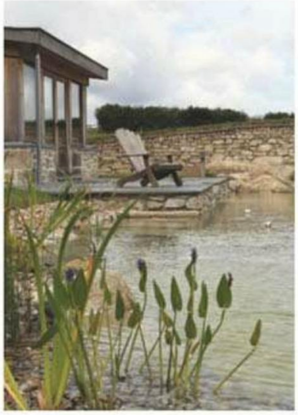

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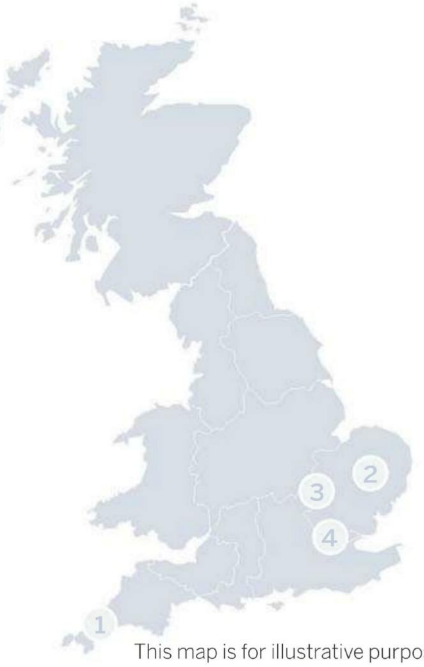

This map is for illustrative purposes only

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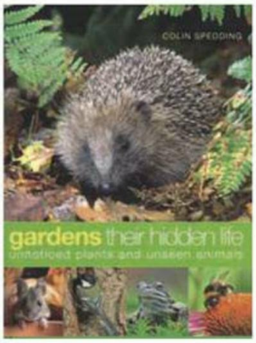
Downtools

Book reviews and Crossword

Know your garden visitors (even if the Cabbage White isn't always the most welcome). Find out more in the new book *Gardens: their hidden life* reviewed overleaf.

SHUTTERSTOCK

Book reviews


COLIN SPEDDING
gardens their hidden life
unnoticed plants and unseen animals

GARDENS: THEIR HIDDEN LIFE

by Colin Spedding

Bloomsbury, £25

ISBN 978 1408158685

As the introduction explains, this is neither a wildlife field guide nor a gardening book, but a fascinating glimpse into the lives of those unnoticed plants and unseen animals – some historically unwelcome – who share our plots. Between us, our total garden space amounts to 16 million acres, so it's up to us to make this important habitat as welcoming as possible.

Professor Spedding lists types of gardens, pinpointing their likely residents, teaching us how, when and why to observe them, and offering advice on providing suitable environments. The book works best when he takes us for a stroll around his garden, affectionately pointing out its hidden guests. Some ideas for wildlife watching are suitable for younger members of the family although they can be slightly didactic in tone, and you would have to be a really keen nature lover to want to construct a 'snailarium' with any real enthusiasm.

The chapter based on Professor Spedding's month-by-month observations of his own garden over 18 years is particularly interesting. As are the fascinating lists – best nectar and food plants for butterflies; moths that fly by day; even animals that can see through double glazing – which pepper the text, accompanied by a plethora of clear photographs and drawings to aid identification. I can see this being a real boon for when my grandchildren start asking those difficult wildlife questions.

I'm always grateful when any creature (recently a slow worm, a spotted flycatcher and a Holly Blue butterfly) decides my plot is home sweet home and loved finding out how to make life better for the 75 species of mammal, 600 birds, 60 butterflies, 2,500 moths and 4,000 beetles that might possibly take up residence in my garden. And with this informative book close to hand I'm feeling more confident I will be able to identify and cherish them all.

Francine Raymond is a gardening columnist for the Sunday Telegraph.

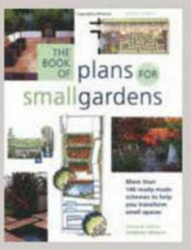
SHUTTERSTOCK

You may think you know the common Cabbage White butterfly, but do you know which lavenders are most likely to encourage it to your garden?

book offer

RRP £25. **Reader offer price £22.50** including p&p.

Designer Annie Guilfoyle selects six books as essential reading for gardeners with small plots

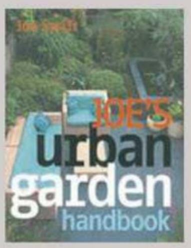


THE BOOK OF PLANS FOR SMALL GARDENS
Editor Andrew Wilson
Mitchell Beazley (out of print – try searching for second-hand copies)
ISBN 978 1845332068

This is a terrific source of inspiration, especially if you have an awkwardly shaped garden. It features 140 ready-made plans from over 50 garden designers.

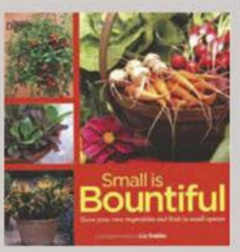
SMALL GARDEN
by John Brookes
Dorling Kindersley, £16.99
ISBN 978 1405312868

Excellent value, and packed with sound advice and wonderful ideas. Sketches and plans along with before and after photos illustrate the designs. A book that works well for both town and country gardens.



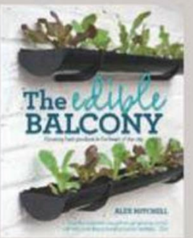
JOE'S URBAN GARDEN HANDBOOK
by Joe Swift
Quadrille, £20
ISBN 978 1844006113

If, like me, you loved Joe's show garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, then this book is for you. Great ideas for contemporary city gardens, it includes Joe's own family garden.



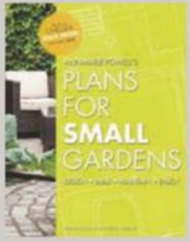
SMALL IS BOUNTIFUL
by Liz Dobbs
Reader's Digest, £14.99
ISBN 978 1780200651

Size shouldn't matter when it comes to growing your own. Even the teeniest of gardens can be home to a tasty vegetable plot. This title offers ideas on over 30 different grow-your-own projects with information on more than 40 different vegetables and fruits from aubergines to strawberries.



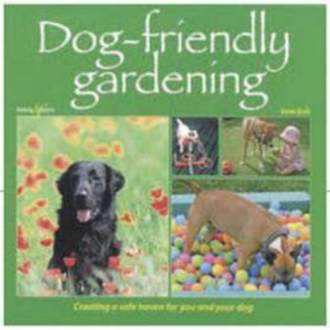
THE EDIBLE BALCONY
by Alex Mitchell
Kyle Cathie, £16.99
ISBN 978 1856269384

An innovative yet practical guide to growing food in urban locations. With stunning photographs, it covers everything from recipes and recycling to vertical growing and hydroponics. Easy-to-follow advice on what to grow when make it useful to every balcony owner.



ANN-MARIE POWELL'S PLANS FOR SMALL GARDENS
by Ann-Marie Powell
Pavilion, £16.99
ISBN 978 1862058767

Ten detailed case studies cover a variety of small gardens, with everything from landscaping and planting, to maintenance. Perfect for those wanting to design and build their own small paradise. **See page 49 for book offer.**



DOG-FRIENDLY GARDENING

by Karen Bush
Hubble and Hattie, 12.99
ISBN 978 1845844103

My two lurchers, prone to mayhem-inducing sprints after rabbits, enjoy my garden as much as I do, but there's always a tension between their instinctive canine traits – manic digging, sunbathing at full stretch in the herbaceous border, stalking cats – and my desire for a garden that doesn't look like a bombsite. This book covers everything from plants that are toxic for dogs and the havoc that can ensue from visiting cats (pelleted lion poo puts them off apparently), through how to make a toilet and sunloungers (yes, really) for your dogs, to finally reuniting your old friend with your garden's soil after he's walked his last.

Karen Bush is primarily a dog expert and if I have one gripe with the book it's that the emphasis is on the dog enjoying himself maybe more than the gardener. But it's no fun yelling constantly at the dog to get off the flowers or worse seeing him chained up. The book's premise is that a safe, happy dog equals a harmonious garden. I've gardened with young children as well – an equally frustrating business – and know which creature I'd rather have follow me round weeding. At least dogs respond to 'No'.

Caroline Beck is a writer and radio producer, and is currently turning a concrete schoolyard into a bee- and butterfly-friendly garden.

book offer

RRP £12.99. **Reader offer price £11.99** including p&p.

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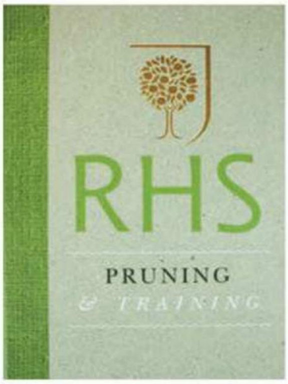
Book reviews

RHS PRUNING & TRAINING

Octopus Books, £12.99 ISBN 978 1845336301

The perfect reference guide for gardeners fearful of making the final cut. Following RHS 'best practice', every conceivable type of pruning and training, for 160 common plants, is covered – above and below ground. From perennials to shrubs, roses and fruit, it soothes and simplifies, using bullet points, boxes and step-by-step illustrations, and is laid out so the reader is not overwhelmed by the volume of information on each page. Geoff Hodge's kindly, concise text will help faint-hearted novices find the confidence to prune and train, while experienced gardeners will appreciate this accessible refresher course. This is no glossy coffee-table tome but a practical handbook, with a wipe-clean cover so committed gardeners can keep it on 24-hour stand-by, on their shed shelf. It is easy to imagine being in the garden, book in one hand, secateurs in the other.

Some readers of 'a certain age' might find a few of the captions, somewhat small, but it is nothing that cannot be remedied with the correct pair of spectacles.



A few of the photographs are not clear and don't deliver the correct message, either – one shows a carpenter's saw being used for pruning, where a bow saw would be better advised. Another shows a eucalyptus grown as a shrub – which looks more like a small, multi-stemmed tree – rather than showing the compact growth that is produced when they are 'stooled' annually. These are minor quibbles given the overall quality of the book and the richness of the information it shares.

To have access to the priceless practical experience and technical know-how of the RHS, makes the cover price a bargain and the book invaluable – you would soon be able to prune and train to RHS standards and create a glorious garden of your own.

Matthew Biggs is a gardener and author of The Complete Book of Vegetables *(Kyle Cathie, 2010)*

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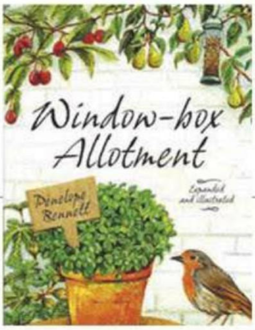


THE WINDOW-BOX ALLOTMENT

by Penelope Bennett

Frances Lincoln, £16.99 (expanded and illustrated edition of book first published in 2001).
ISBN 978-0711231733

Sometimes a book delivers more than its title suggests and this is certainly true in this case. Penelope Bennett is opinionated in the nicest possible way, with a lovely turn of phrase that by turn informs, entertains and provokes. The book is packed with practical information for the small-space urban gardener, but is much more than a manual. It's a thoroughly good read, whatever the size of your garden.

When cultivating a tiny roof garden, what you lose in space you gain in the time you have to observe the growing process, and Penelope's detailed accounts of seeds germinating and seedlings development are fascinating.

There are humorous moments too – fortnightly reminders to sow lettuce had her musing that her diary looked like it 'belonged to a rabbit'. Penelope is definitely at the extreme end of urban gardening, using her diluted urine as a compost activator, sleeping with bedroom windows wide open to benefit the plants and sharing her living room with a desktop wormery, but this is a delightful book that will kindle or reinvigorate a passion for gardening.

Stephanie Donaldson is a journalist and co-author of The Elements of Organic Gardening *(W&N, 2007)*

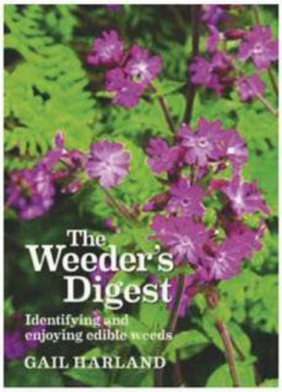
book offer

RRP £16.99. **Reader offer price £15.29** including p&p.

THE WEEDER'S DIGEST: IDENTIFYING AND ENJOYING EDIBLE WEEDS

by Gail Harland

Green Books, £12.95
ISBN 978 1900322997



Weeds are experiencing a bit of a renaissance. A surge of interest in hedgerow foraging has encouraged a growing number to want to learn more about our uncultivated island flora, especially the edible kind. This book, written by a qualified gardener, community dietician and weed grazer for 20 years, encourages us to see these plants in a pragmatic, or at least less jaundiced light.

Divided into two parts, the first, introductory section, gets to grips with the various definitions of what weeds are, before broadening out into a balanced discussion of the impact their characteristics and life cycles have on horticulture. The resultant plea is that because many are both visually attractive to us, and useful to wildlife they should be tolerated, perhaps even welcomed into our beds and borders.

The various techniques of weed control are presented in a light, chatty style, covering practical techniques as well as use of herbicides. Experienced gardeners will find little here that is new, but critically important is the chapter on poisonous plants. Besides profiling the really toxic, such as hemlocks and nightshades, this chapter discusses other harmful toxins and the plants that produce them.

The second, larger, section is a directory of around a 100 various common weed species. Around 75 per cent are profiled, with the remainder mentioned because they are closely associated, botanically or culturally. Visual characteristics and habitat are described, along with their various uses, citing which parts of the plant are edible and when.

A sprinkling of interesting recipes, gleaned from around the UK and Europe, accompany the various species profiles. But, it is essential you correctly identify any plant and understand its properties before eating anything unfamiliar – while one particular plant is safe, something closely related or superficially similar may not be – and this is where the book falls down for the erstwhile forager.

This is not, nor does it pretend to be, a field flora. While tinted information panels on toxins and their effects are clearly presented throughout, descriptions are general; there are no botanical illustrations and the single picture accompanying each profile is not always adequate for identification.

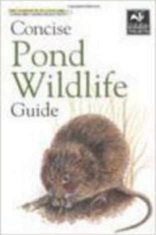
Anyone wanting to enter the brave new world of food foraging, will find this book a helpful guide, but should make sure they stick only to what they know and can confidently identify.

Ian Hodgson is former editor-in-chief of RHS journals and a freelance editor and garden writer.

book offer

RRP £12.95. **Reader offer price £11.95** including p&p.

other recently released books for gardeners

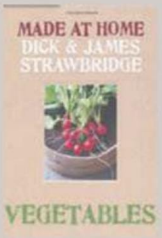


POND WILDLIFE GUIDE

A concise guide to the fauna and flora of still water pools.

The Wildlife Trusts, £4.99

ISBN 978 1847739773



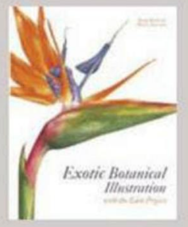
MADE AT HOME: VEGETABLES

by Dick and James Strawbridge

Tips and recipes for those new to vegetable growing.

Mitchell Beazley, £12.99

ISBN 978 1845336561



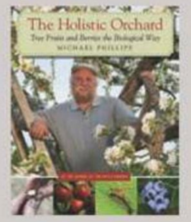
EXOTIC BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATION

by Rosie Martin and Meriel Thurstan

Practical guide to painting exotic flowers and fruits.

Batsford, £18.50

ISBN 978 1849940313



THE HOLISTIC ORCHARD

by Michael Phillips

Organic orchard guide from the USA, but useful for growers everywhere.

Chelsea Green, £35

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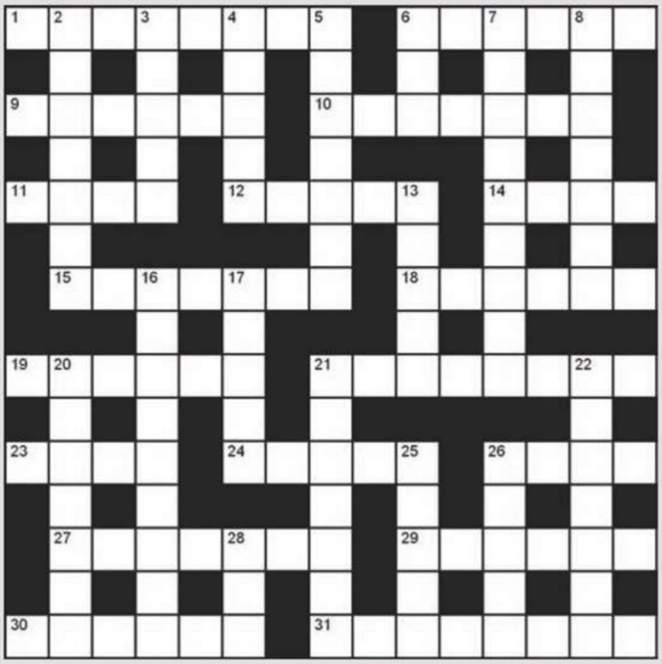
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Type of iris associated with a natural swimming pond by Michael Littlewood, maybe – and clean beach! (4,4)

6 In Nassau, Cuban Japanese laurel genus (6)

9 Plant collector/gardener, Collingwood, aka 'Cherry' altered margin (6)

10 Small underground growth – found in beetroot, lettuce (7)

11 Curved shape, left off deciduous conifer (4)

12 *Rosa* 'Rick __' named after the chef (5)

14 A main shoot ending in a flower – in fancy melons (4)

15 Sort of plants popular in rockeries (7)

18 A herbal/floral infusion – in effect is an emetic! (6)

19 Artificially accelerated the growth of eg rhubarb (6)

21 *Viticella* is one form of this climber at Grafton Cottage, Staffs (8)

23 Harold, 19th-century garden designer – turned poet! (4)

24/5 down Modest plots featured in this issue – converting elm grasslands (5,7)

26/25 down Tiny creature commonly found in damp places, under stones, in bark (9)

27 Underground stem producing roots and shoots (7)

29 Pull plant from soil, cracking our pot (6)

30 Showy perennial composite eg 'David Howard' or 'Bishop of Llandaff' (6)

31 Horticultural dealer whose product comes by packet? (8)

DOWN

2 Honesty genus – transforming a urinal! (7)

3 & 26 Subject of Arne Maynard's design idea this issue "Throw rakes around" (10)

4 Citrus trees' horrible slime (5)

5 See 24 Across

6 Past part of snapdragon (3)

7 Genus of huge-leaved herbs – produces cacao oils (9)

8 James, horticulturist creator of Biddulph Grange (7)

13 Saltpetre… found in garden it reacts! (5)

16 Scenic style of meadow planting pioneered by Professor Nigel Dunnett (9)

17 Where leaves are attached to stems (5)

20 Shrub with daisy-like flowers – sort of air aloe (7)

21 Grubs of these beetles damage plants, ruining RHS café! (7)

22 Genus of Morning Glory and sweet potato (7)

25 See 26 Across

26 See 3

28 Eggs… found in lovage (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

JULY'S SOLUTIONS

ACROSS 1 *Stipa* **4** Parsnips **8** Husk **9** Tango **10** Whip **11** Prairie **12** Stone **13** Russet **15/3** Sea aster **17** Dove **19** Pear **21** Paw **23** Desire **28** Leaf-scar **30** Over **31** Ivied **32** Inca **33** Trentham **34** *Rheum*

DOWN 1 Sculpture **2** Inkcaps **4** Punnets **5/16/25** Roots and shoots **6** New wood **7** Price **14** Tap **18** *Verbascum* **20** Root-run **22** William **24** Sessile **26** Hever **27** Smith **29** Alder

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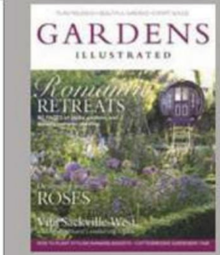
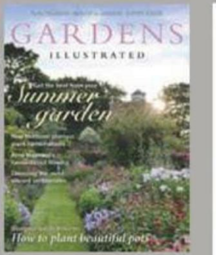


JUNE 2012
Romantic gardens and dreamy summer planting; designing with roses; stylish hanging baskets; Vita Sackville-West; astrantias; Dan Pearson's top summer shrubs.



JULY 2012
Glorious summer plant combinations; favourite cut flowers; profile on verbascums; ideas for beautiful pots from designer Sarah Price; a stylish potager.

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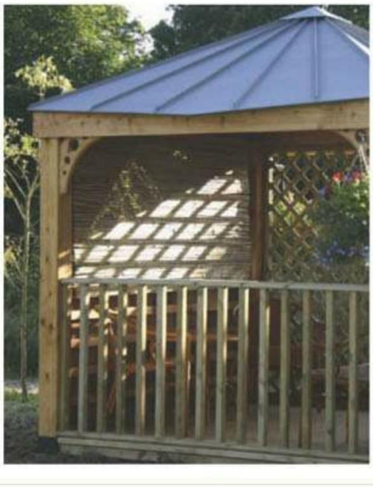

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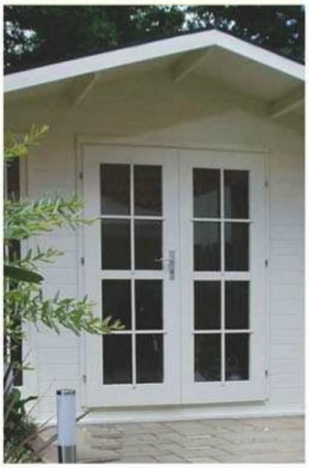

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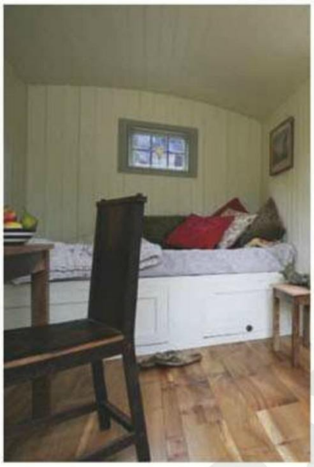

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Be sure to see the delights these beautiful gardens have to offer in August

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ADDRESS **Bullers Way, Abbotsbury, Dorset DT3 4LA**
WEBSITE **www.abbotsburygardens.co.uk**
TEL **01305 871387**

2. WREST PARK

This once secret garden is one of England's most beautiful historic landscapes. Discover woodland glades, waterways and stunning buildings. This summer, the restored French Parterre injects a flourish of 19th-century French formality to Wrest Park. Don't miss the beautiful sculptures in the recently launched Dairy sculpture gallery.

ADDRESS **Silsoe, Nr Luton, Bedfordshire MK45 4HR**
WEBSITE **www.english-heritage.org.uk/wrestpark**
TEL **08703 331181**

3. PICTON CASTLE

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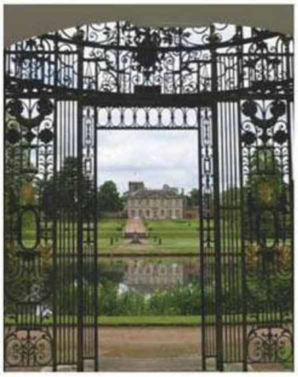

The beautiful and historic Melbourne Hall Garden was originally planned in the 18th century. A more recent imaginative and extensive planting scheme means that an array of unique shrubs, trees and plants make this garden a gem of botanical importance. Open April–Sept, Wed, Sat, Sun, Bank Holiday Mon 1.30-5.30pm. Hall open during August.

TEL **01332 862502**

5. MARKS HALL ESTATE

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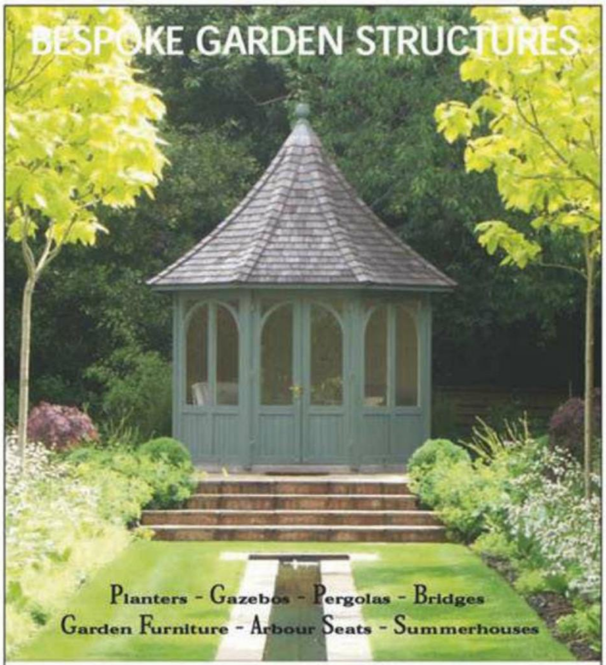

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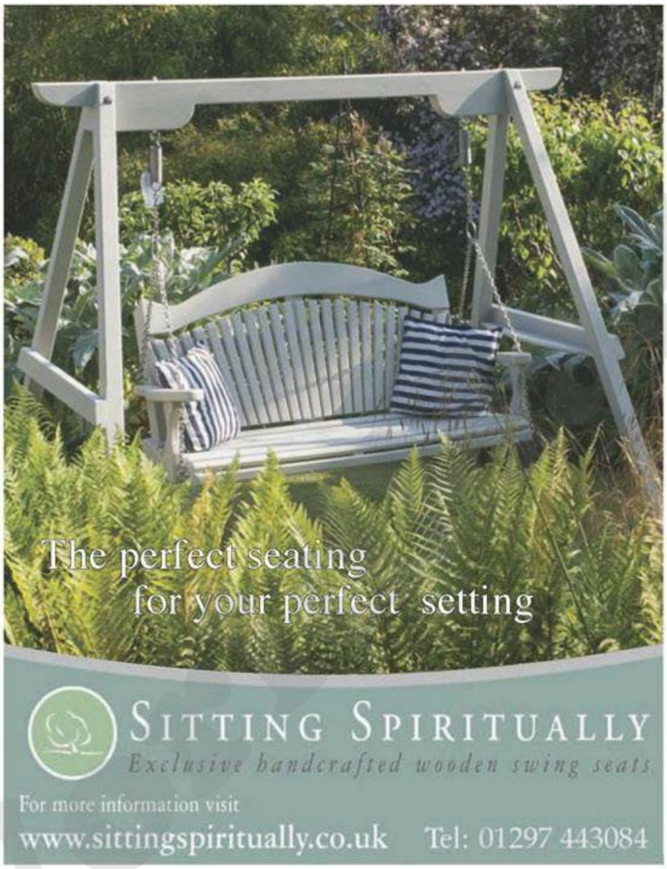

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TOM STUART-SMITH DESIGN; PHOTO: ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS

in next month's issue

- Tom Stuart-Smith design for a family garden
- Dan Pearson's favourite late-summer shrubs
- Arne Maynard's guide to self-seeding plants
- Outdoor cooking at Cleve West's allotment

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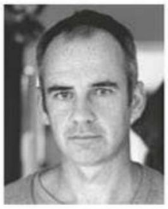
Missing pieces

There's a large, shrub-shaped hole in Frank's borders and he's at a loss how to fill it

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**



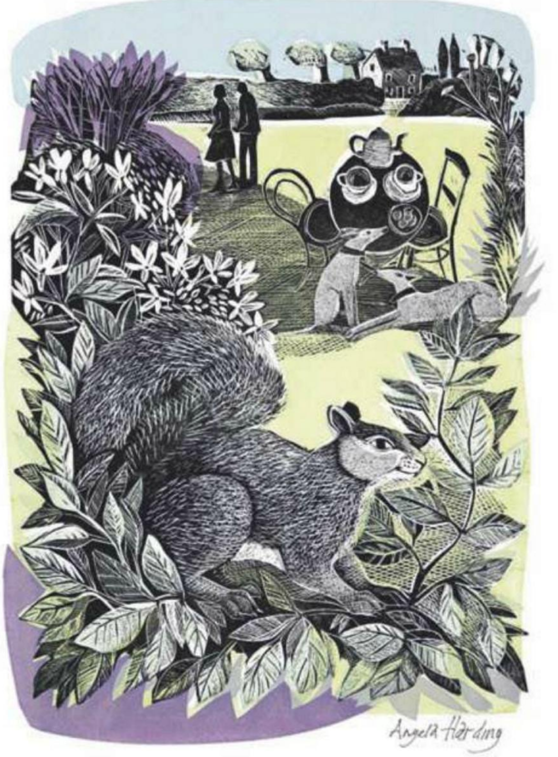
Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

I'm having a shrub crisis. It came about while chatting to my friend Helen. We were looking over her immaculate garden in Dublin and speculating how she might replace a *Crataegus orientalis* which had disobligingly snuffed it leaving an obvious gap. Having decided that a tree had been a bit much there in any case, she wanted to replace it with a shrub. While I was in mid-flow of prolific and useless suggestions, Helen fixed me with a deceptively kind eye and said, "What shrubs do *you* grow in *your* garden?" My mind went blank. My mouth opened and closed over random noises while I tried and failed to picture the garden at home, or think of a single name worth the mention. Eventually I muttered something about hydrangeas and looked away. I would have ascribed such a poor reaction to having been put on the spot by a terrifyingly eminent plant guru, but in the days and nights of travelling that followed I was often pulled short or woken by the same haunting question: what shrubs do I grow in my garden?

By the time I reached home the self-doubt had escalated to the point that it was almost a relief to see that there was a garden at all. But any gladness on that score was overshadowed by the clear want of shrubs: a truth to which I had become blind by habituation. Ten years in the making, the long border still has a threadbare look. Expanses remain adrift without anchor plants and the reluctant conclusion is that I need to be a bit more realistic about what gets planted.

It is not for the want of planting. That border is an absolute necropolis of a shrubbery. It is for a complete and shameful want of intelligence. The clue is that the other, perpendicular, border, which I think to be of less importance, has a perfectly decent coverage of shrubby matter. But that is where the ordinary things go. All the special, exciting things go in the long border, and sicken, and expire.

It doesn't help that I developed my tastes in Ireland and the west of Scotland and the south of England, and whenever I am seduced by an unusual leaf in a Cornish nursery I can convince myself that this might be the one plant that is not nearly as tender as it looks and would in fact relish life at a thousand feet in the midlands with a water table that would require it to be semi-amphibious in the winter. If this is where I choose to be happy, why would the plants I fall in love with not want to live here too? It is a common enough delusion of the enamoured.



> *"I was woken by the same haunting question: what shrubs do I grow in my garden?"*

Ordinary, robust things are required to make a structure. I am trying my best, and staring hard at all the rows of dull-leaved worthies in the local nurseries. The theory is that once they are established they may provide shelter and I can begin to experiment with frivolities again. The theory falls flat the more I look, because I don't like philadelphuses or forsythias or any of the other 20 things with common little leaves, vulgar scents and boring flowers. Things that were so robust that they had survived in this garden when we arrived and it was derelict. Things that I ripped out with satisfaction thinking that I was going to do better.

There is some hope. I found a promising buckthorn this week with big crinkly leaves and an alleged penchant for the cold and wet. I've remembered one or two good ordinary things that I never got round to planting, like the sterile form of the guelder rose. And my friend Helen is about to make a reciprocal visit. I can stand her in front of my obvious gaps and ask a challenging question or two. There will be no stammering from her. Suggestions, made in her deceptively kind voice, will be correct, insightful and absolutely crushing. ☐

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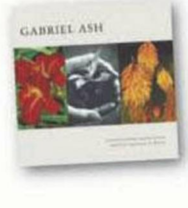

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